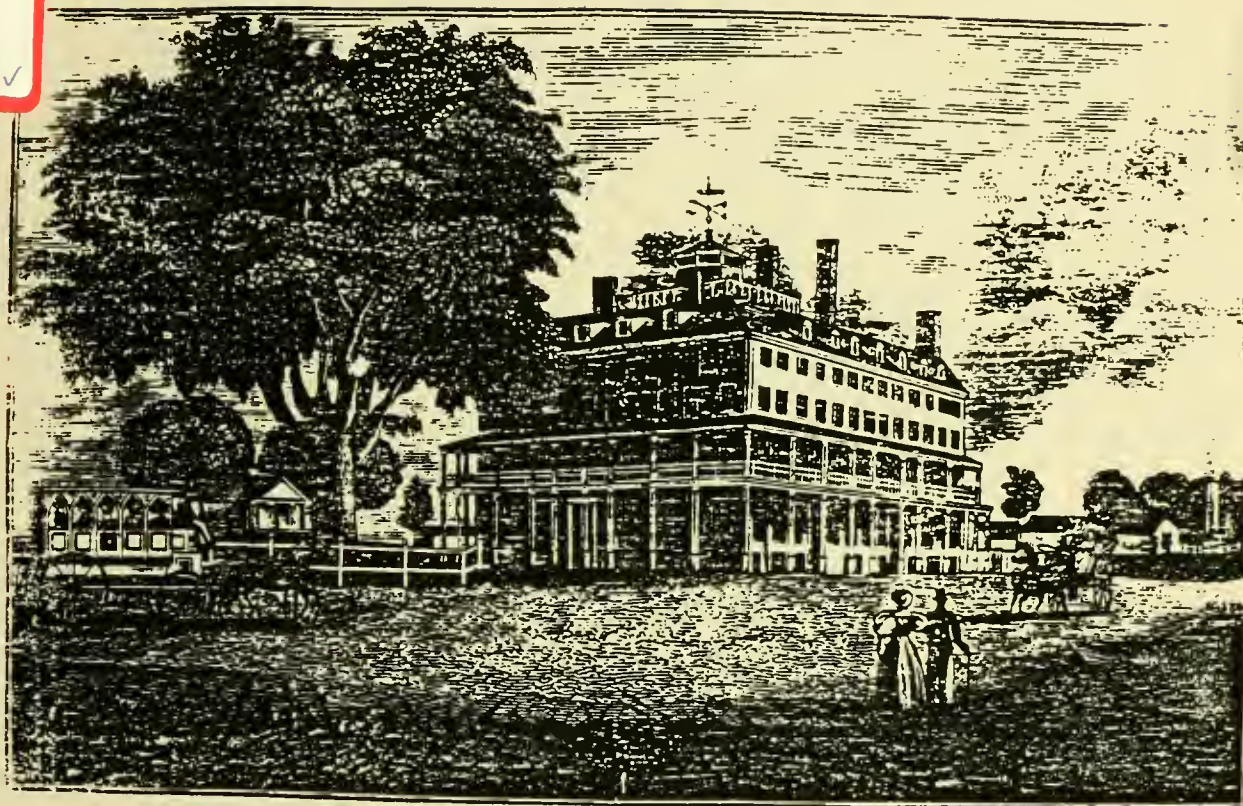


GOV DOQ

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View of the Maverick House at East Boston

HISTORICAL EAST BOSTON

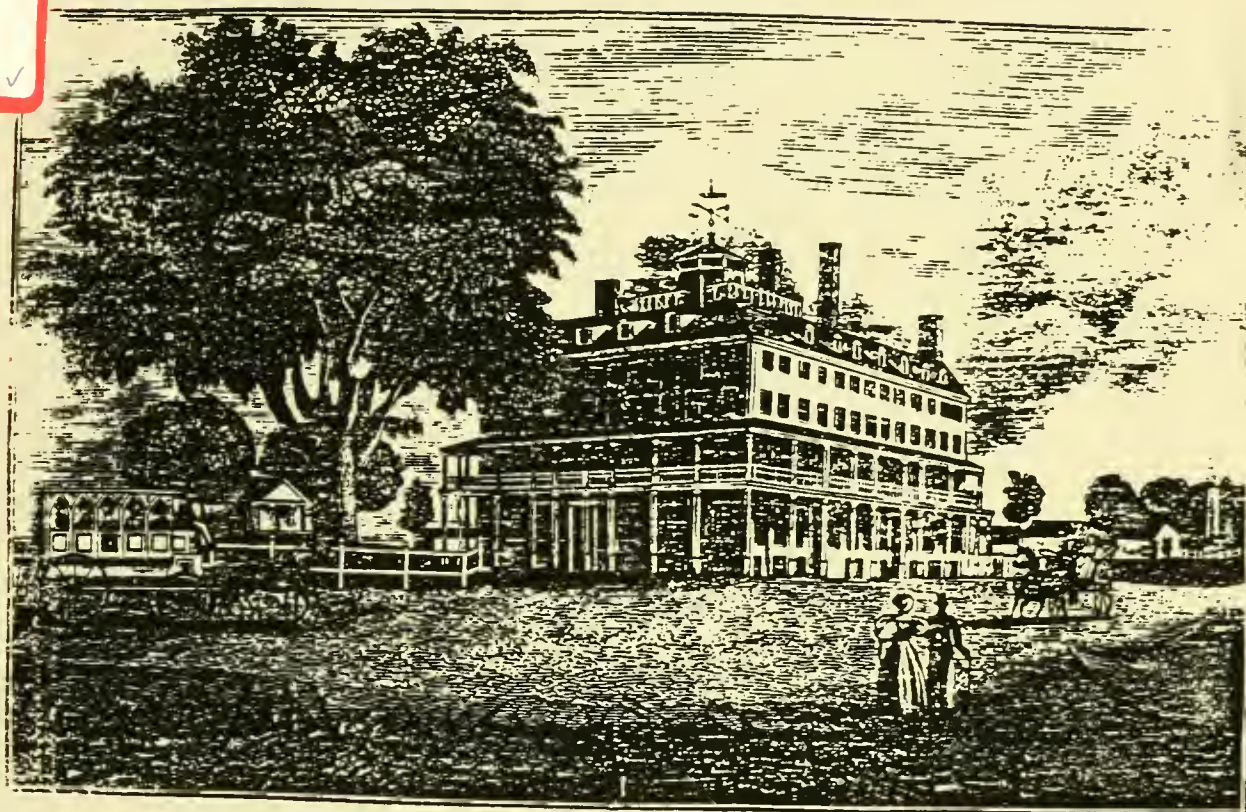


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[View of the Maverick House at East Boston.]

HISTORICAL EAST BOSTON



What is known today as East Boston was originally five separate islands - Noddle, Apple, Governor's, Bird, and Hog. Throughout the 1600s and 1700s they were from a land pasture, and forest, and a retreat from the mainland. Since the 1830s, the islands have been leveled, enlarged, and merged into a land mass three times their original size. By the nineteenth century, East Boston was flourishing as a center of shipbuilding and commerce. Donald McKay launched his great clippers from her piers and later Cunard ships brought cargoes from around the world to her docks. Since that time, the changing demands of trade and travel have been a strain on the community. The waterfront has lost its glory, and roads, tunnels, and the airport have displaced homes and businesses.

Today Hog Island is Orient Heights, and Apple, Bird, and Governor's islands are the core of Logan Airport. Though street ~~street~~ names bear testament to the old Yankee founders, East Boston is largely Italian. There are smaller groups of Irish and Scandinavians, but little remains of a once-thriving Jewish community. Hispanic, ~~and~~ black families are the newest arrivals. ASIAN.

Buoyed by the strength of their ethnic traditions, East Boston residents are striving to revitalize their neighborhood. Since 1968, when Wood Island Park had been lost to Logan Airport, local groups have been mobilizing to block airport expansion, improve recreational facilities, and plan housing developments.

IN EARLY TIMES

The East Boston islands were heavily forested ~~once~~. But Indians of the Massachusetts tribe cleared acreage to plant corn and later colonists used the plentiful timber for fuel. As they cut trees, the colonists created pastures and farmers began to ferry cattle from the mainland to graze.

The Winthrop family owned Governor's Island from 1632 until 1808 when the United States government acquired it to build a fort. Apple Island, small and wooded, was a popular site for picnics. In 1867 the City of Boston bought it for use as a gravel pit. A 150 foot drumlin, a hill formed by glaciers, dominated Hog Island. As various individuals purchased the island, they tried to erase the stigma of its original title, renaming it Susanna, Belle Isle, and finally Breed's Island. Bird Island, which was largely marsh, sank into the harbor in the early 1800s. Before this, as a warning to privateers entering Boston's waters, the Massachusetts Bay Colony hanged pirates there.

As late as 1830 Noddle's Island had only eight residents. Samuel Maverick was the first permanent settler, receiving property as a grant from the Council of Plymouth in 1633. He built a house the next year and began farming. In 1638, Maverick became one of the colony's first slaveholders. However, he was a religious nonconformist and was jailed in the 1640s when he attempted to extend citizenship to non-Congregationalists like himself. In 1650 he sold his property and returned to England.

The land passed through many different hands in the next 20 years. In 1670, a Colonel Shrimpton purchased the island and built a summer home. Henry Howell Williams and his son, Thomas, leased and farmed the island from 1764 to 1830. Often they invited guests from Boston to parties at their home.

The first naval conflict and second battle of the Revolution, the Battle of Noddle's Island and Chelsea Creek, was fought to gain possession of the valuable cattle on Hog and Noddle's islands. On May 27, 1775 colonists and British Marines clashed. The Americans eventually beached and burned a British schooner (at the site of the Meridian St. Bridge) and won the battle. As a result, the Continental Congress promoted the commanding officer, Israel Putnam, to Major General. The colonists evacuated the cattle and burned the islands, leaving scorched earth for the British troops occupying Boston. Soldiers razed the Williams house, but Thomas returned to Noddle's Island after the war and built a new home.

In 1801, when Boston's population was 25,000, Noddle's Island boasted but one new mansion, a millpond dam, and a wharf. Thirty-two years later General William Sumner paid \$80,000 for the island and founded the East Boston Company, which owned East Boston and guided the course of its history for the next 100 years. The goal of the corporation was to develop a prosperous trading center and an alluring vacation resort.

Landfill operations began at once. Noddle's Island had four points of high ground - Camp Hill, Smith Hill, Eagle Hill, and Uplands Farm - between which lay marshes. Workmen for the East Boston Company leveled Smith Hill, at the westernmost end of the island, and dumped its dirt into a swamp which separated Camp Hill from Eagle Hill. Architects then divided the land into four sections or neighborhoods. The company graded the island, fashioned streets in a grid pattern, and sold house lots.

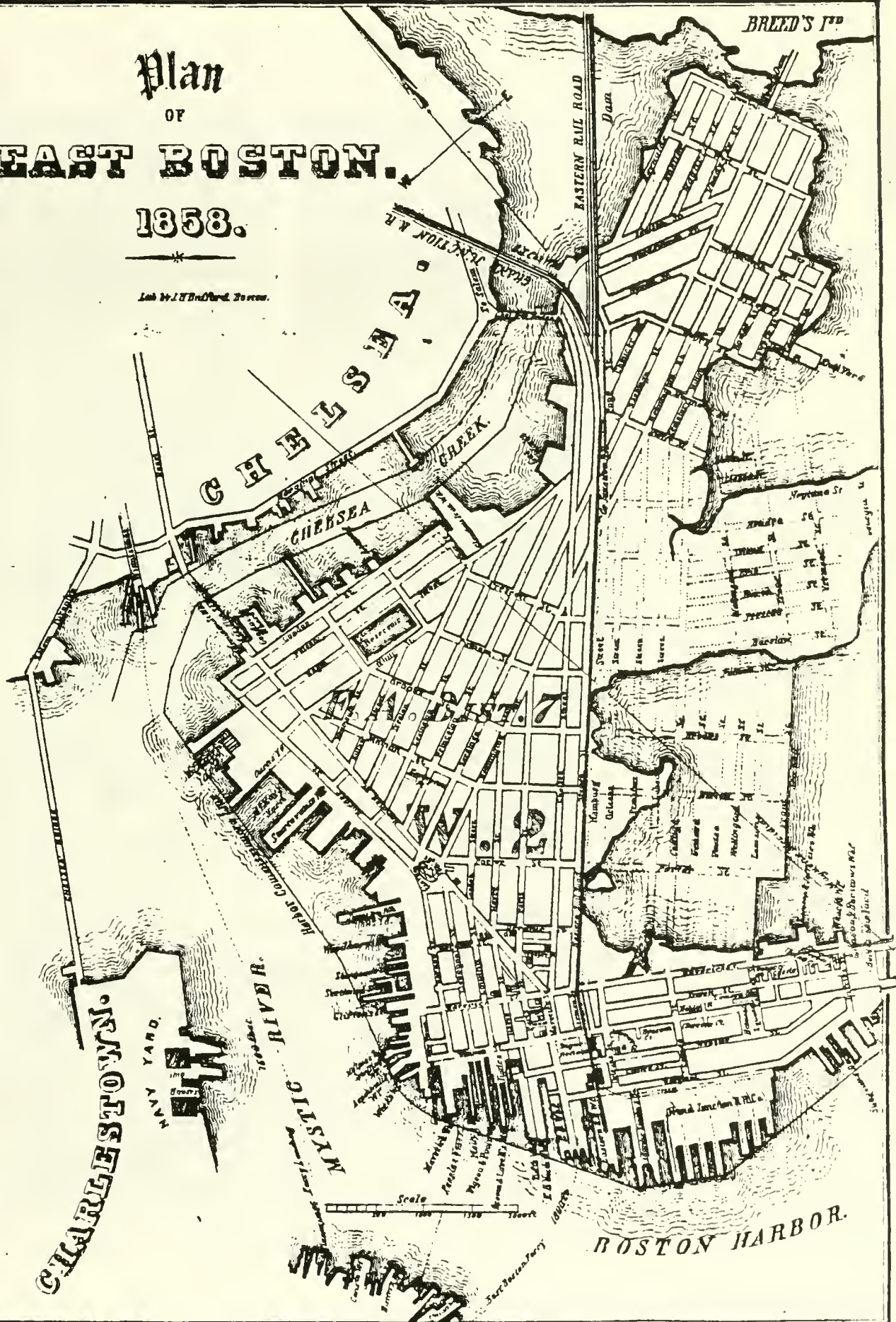
The company also saw great potential for developing East Boston's waterfront. While commerce flourished in the 1830s and 1840s, Boston lacked piers. The China and East India trades burgeoned and, when gold was discovered in California, ships began making the regular journey from coast to coast, around the tip of South America. The increased distances between ports created a demand for faster vessels, which existing shipyards could not accommodate. So, in its first year of existence, the East Boston Company built wharves, obtained a freight terminal of the Eastern Railroad and encouraged shipbuilders to locate their yards along East Boston's untapped waterfront.

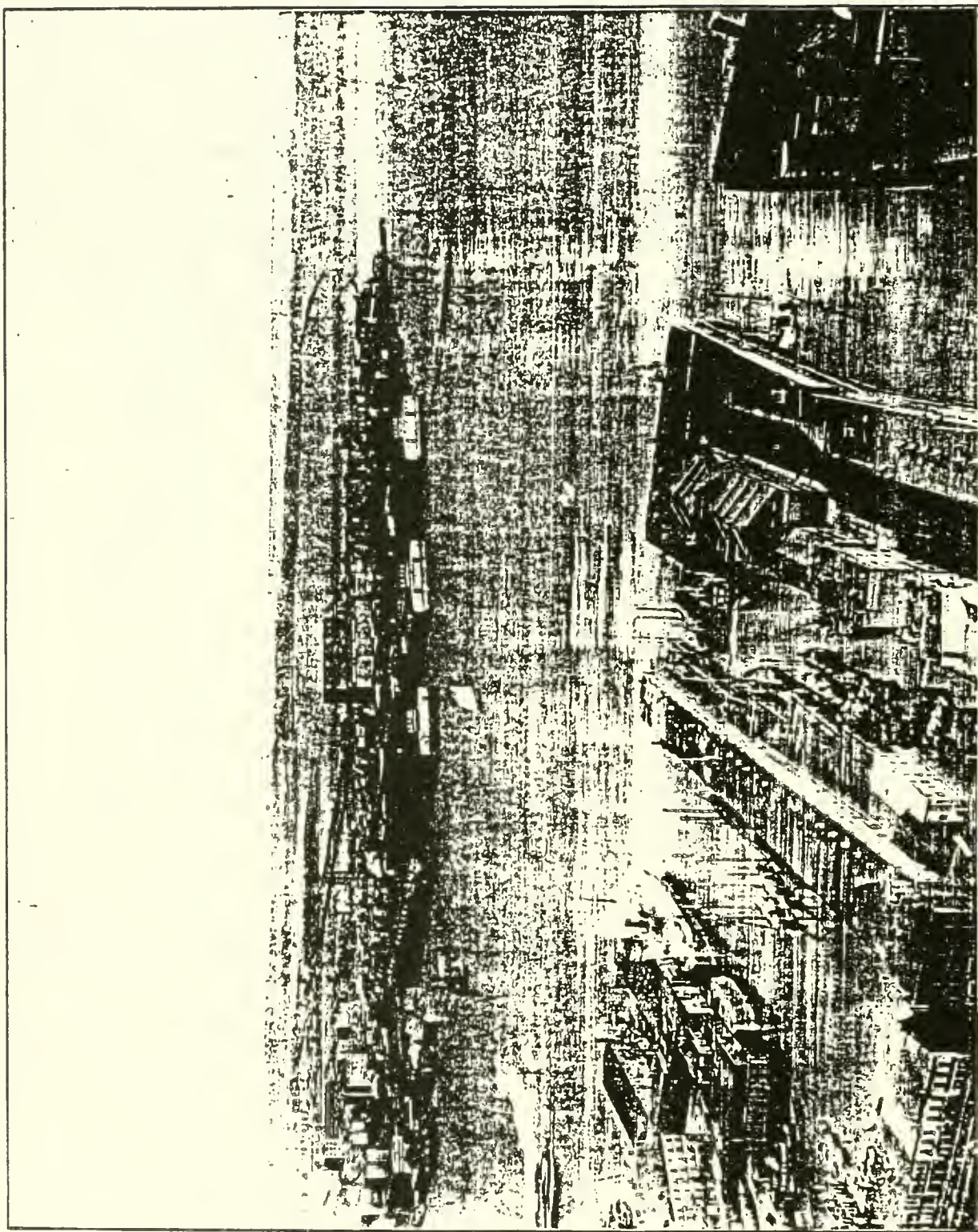
The company succeeded in its efforts and by 1835, 697 persons were living in 50 private homes on the island; 10 wharves lined the waterfront, and a ship had unloaded at an East Boston pier. There was a sugar refinery, an iron forgery, a bakery, a timber company, and a manufacturer of small vessels. Along the wharves were lumber yards, mast and spar makers, fish packers, and a grindstone and plastic supplier. The 80-room Maverick House, an elegant resort hotel, opened that year, and the "Maverick" and "East Boston" ferries began their regular runs off Lewis Street to Boston.

(The ferries no longer transport people across the harbor. The city discontinued service in the 1950s, assuming two vehicular tunnels and the MTA line would fill transportation needs. But memories of the ferries are imbedded in

BREED'S F^{LD}

Let W be the W -module





THE DOCKS AT EAST BOSTON, FROM THE CUSTOM HOUSE TOWER

the minds of all who ever rode them:.) The North Ferry went from Battery Wharf and Commercial Street to Border Street. The South Ferry went from the foot of State Street to Lewis Street, just below Maverick Square. The ferries were always packed with passengers, horses and TEAMS an occasional electric truck-model T, and pushcarts. There was also a ferry from Boston to Charlestown. The whole waterfront was packed with people from morning to night, horses pulling and hauling heavy drays filled with food stuffs, cases of beer, sugar barrels and bags, cotton, hides and wool.

~~The~~ The Narrow Gauge railroad train used to run from Lynn. It had the narrowest tracks in the world. Then they had a big ferry down here, the three-cent ferry. You'd get off the Narrow Gauge and on the ferry that you took to Rowes Wharf. People went to work that way.

East Boston fast became an important shipbuilding center. In 1839, Samuel Hall launched the "Adbar" from his boatyard at the west end of Maverick Street, christening a boom that lasted until the end of the Civil War when steamers replaced sailing ships. In 1844, a 34-year-old shipbuilder named Donald McKay set up his yard on Border Street, near the base of Eagle Hill. Here, for 20 years, McKay designed and constructed clipper ships, packets, and traders. McKay was the most famous of all East Boston shipmakers and his clippers - the Flying Cloud, the Sovereign of the Seas, the Bald Eagle, and Lightning - set record speeds as they sailed around the world.

Over the next 25 years the population of East Boston spiralled from 1,455 to 20,000. The island became a desirable residential community. Ships captains and wealthy merchants built brick townhouses on Jeffries Point and spacious Victorian frame houses atop Eagle Hill. The chance for employment lured many skilled workmen to East Boston from Canada and the South Shore of Massachusetts during the decade of the '40s. Most of these men lived near Maverick Square and Paris Street in rooming houses and cheap tenements. Protestant churches prospered; there were five denominations in East Boston by mid-century: Congregationalist, Universalist, Baptist, Episcopalian, and Presbyterian.

During the 1850s and '60s, Irish fleeing the potatoe famine arrived in great numbers. They formed the bulk of the unskilled labor force which built East Boston's piers, extended its railroad systems, and worked as stevedores on its busy docks. Barred from skilled occupations because of anti-Catholic discrimination, they devoted their energies to building an effective political organization and a strong church. The Kennedy's settled in East Boston, where Joseph P. Kennedy was born and raised; they were businessmen, bankers and land speculators. In 1844, the Irish established the first Catholic Church in East Boston, the Church of Saint Nicholas, and later built the Most Holy Redeemer Church and Our Lady of Assumption, Sacred Heart, and Our Lady of the Sea churches.

After the Civil War, when the wooden-shipbuilding industry collapsed, East Boston's economy went into a long decline. McKay launched his last clipper, The Glory of the Seas, in 1869 and finally closed his yards in 1875. Skilled craftsmen turned elsewhere for work and moved to the Back Bay and the recently opened "streetcar suburbs".

Immigration of Italians and Russian Jews reversed the decline and doubled East Boston's population from 1885 to 1915. Land speculators bought abandoned estates and middle class houses and, after subdividing them, rented them out to the immigrants. The East Boston Company filled in the flats behind Jeffries Point to make room for even more dwellings and began developing single family homes on Breed's Hill. The first of the triple-decker houses and tenements still standing today were built by the mid-1800s.

After the turn of the century industries proliferated in residential areas like Cottage Street and Maverick Square and along the waterfront, providing the new-comers with low-skilled, low-paying jobs. Docks that once hosted a proud shipbuilding industry were now railroad docks, encumbered by freight haulers, coal yards, and ship repair facilities, such as the Atlantic Works. Machine shops, foundries, the Maverick Mills and Addison Street, garment and shoe factories, and the General Electric Lamp Factory offered employment.

East Boston became an ethnic enclave, whose residents exhibited a fighting spirit that countered their community's poverty. By 1905, the Jewish community was the largest in New England. On Chelsea and Porter streets, there were kosher markets and restaurants, dry goods stores, chicken houses and other Jewish businesses. The community supported three synagogues, the first of which opened in 1892.

The majority of the men earned their living in ways typical of early American-Jewish settlers. They were tailors, shopkeepers, peddlers, junk dealers, and industrial workers. As they saved enough money, however, families moved to more desirable areas such as Roxbury, Dorchester, and Chelsea. By 1930, the Jewish population had dwindled to a handful.

A few Italians lived in East Boston in the late 1800s, but it was 1905 before large numbers arrived. The first Italian settlers came from the North End and soon were joined by "paisani" and relatives from Italy. Rents were low. People settled on Jeffries Point, where there were small gardens and open space, and around Maverick and Cottage streets. By 1915 Italians formed a significant part of East Boston's population. The community spread to Chelsea Street and then to the eastern slope of Eagle Hill. Later, the more well-off moved to Orient Heights.

The Italians set down permanent roots in East Boston. Many families built homes and the community raised money to build two churches, Mt. Carmel and St. Lazarus, where Italian, in its various dialects, was spoken. The immigrant's strong ties to Italy provided a focal point for social and religious activities. Until 15 or 20 years ago, societies dedicated to the patron saints of Italian villages and provinces sponsored festas on Cottage and Porter Streets throughout the summer months. The societies organized recreational functions as well.

East Boston offered its residents other opportunities for recreation: playgrounds on Paris Street, Eagle Hill, and at the Heights; four movie theatres; dance halls, and several leagues and clubs. The settlement houses in East Boston - the Good Will House on Webster Street, Trinity House on Meridian Street - were established in the late 1880s to relieve the hardships of immi-

grants and to hasten their "Americanization". The houses also developed athletic, crafts, and drama programs for children and young adults. Caroline Orr at Trinity House started a summer camp for girls in 1933, a pioneer venture which is still in existence.

William Amerina Playground consisted of four acres between Cottage, Maverick, Frankfort, and Gove Streets in the First Section, and was used for soccer, baseball, football, and squash, and ice skating in winter. But the most outstanding recreational facility was Wood Island Park. Designed by the famous landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted and completed in 1898, this 75-acre park had field and bathhouses, playing fields, a cinder track, a public beach, picnic areas and shaded walkways. Families, young couples, religious groups and the East Boston High School physical education classes all enjoyed it. In the 1960s, Logan Airport absorbed both Wood Island Park and Amerina Field, as well as surrounding islands, replacing them with a runway, post office and car rentals, depriving East Boston of most of its open space.

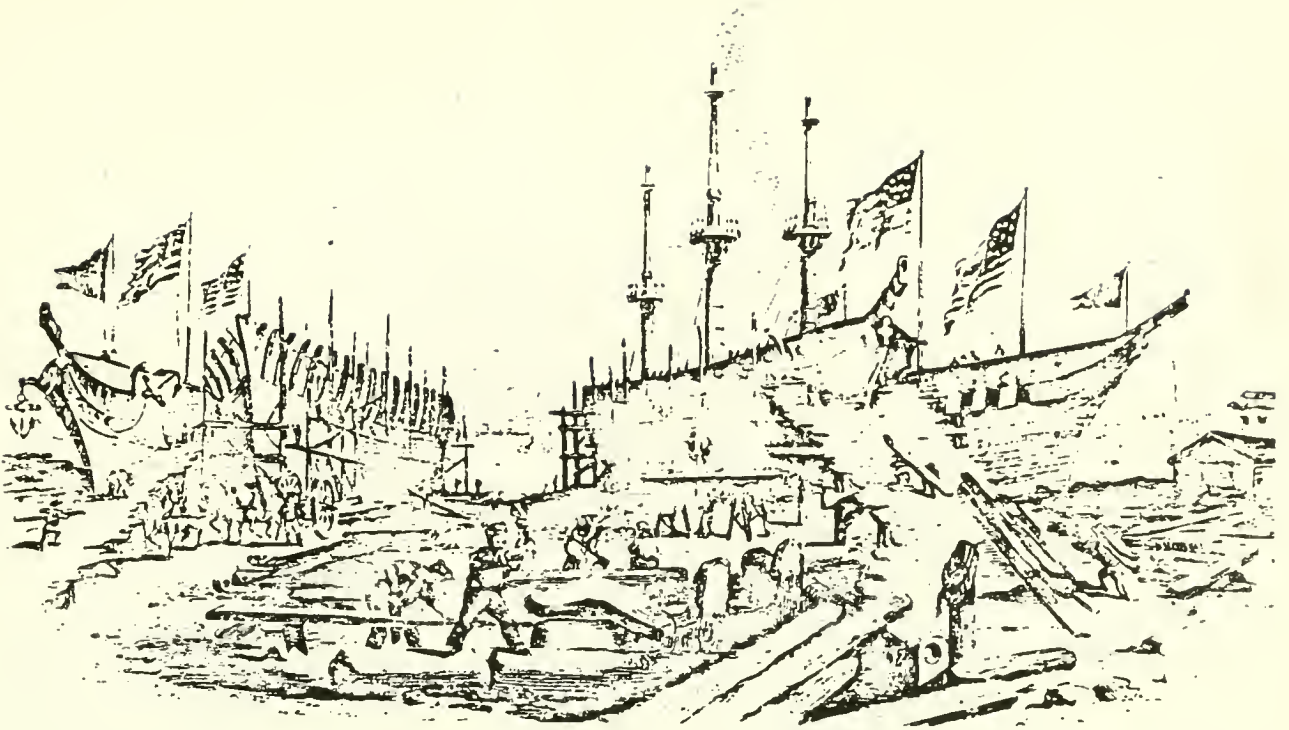
Wood Island Park, which was renamed World War Memorial Park in the 1920s, has become a symbol of the injustices suffered by East Boston in the name of progress. Its loss is keenly felt by everyone in the community:

Logan Airport was born in 1922 when the state legislature authorized construction of an airfield on the reclaimed flats at East Boston. In 1923 the airfield was a 189-acre cinder patch, with two landing strips and three hangers. Four years later, Charles Lindbergh landed at the airfield and the entire community celebrated with a ticker tape parade through the streets.

The population of East Boston peaked at 64,069 in 1925. With the implementation of national immigration restrictions in 1924 the population leveled off. However, beginning with the construction of the Sumner Tunnel, people have been pushed out of their homes and neighborhoods have faltered, accelerating an exodus to the nearby cities of Revere, Malden, and Everett. In the last decade, the trend has been checked. The people who settled in East Boston in this century have staked a claim there and do not want to leave.

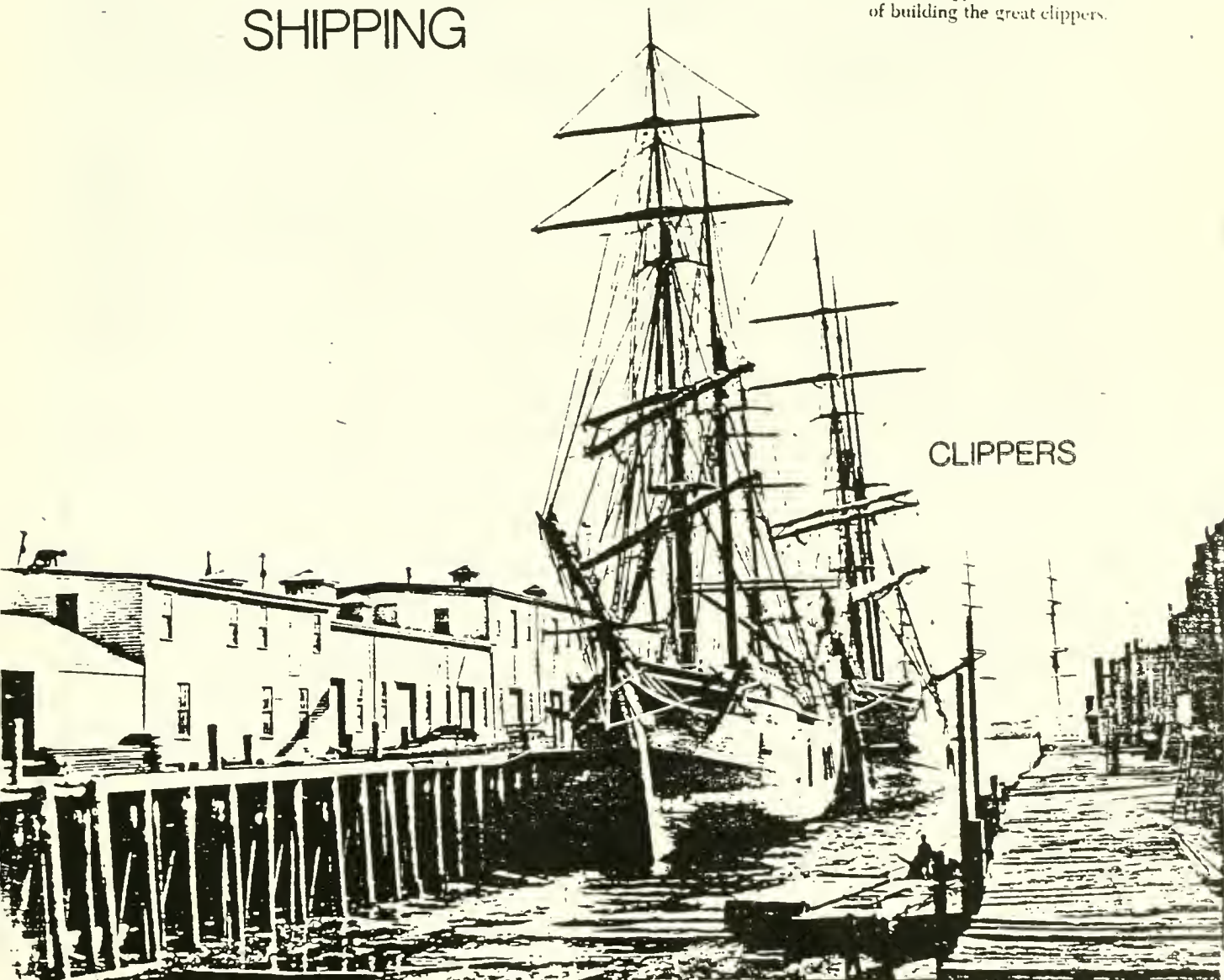
The families and individuals who have chosen to stay in East Boston are the keystone of the neighborhood's future.

*Excerpted from East Boston - Boston 200 Neighborhood History Series, The Boston 200 Corporation, 1976.



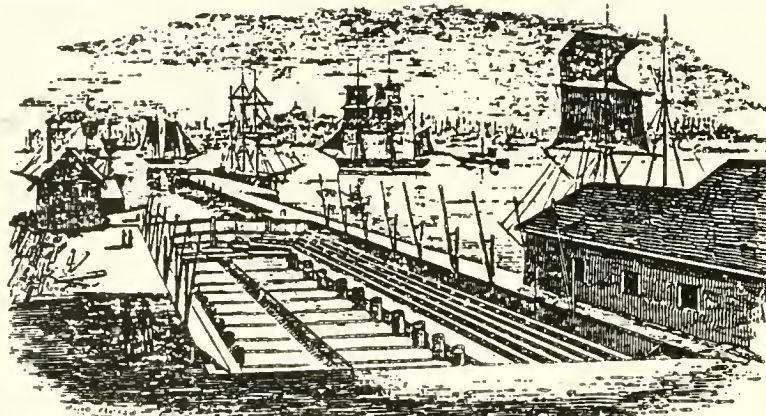
A view of the activity in an East Boston shipyard during the era of building the great clippers.

SHIPPING



CLIPPERS

Dry Docks.



LARGE DOCK. { Length of Dock, 262 ft. Width between Abutments, 46 ft. Draft of Water, 15 to 20 ft. }
 Width of Dock, 70 ft. SMALL DOCK. { Length of Dock, 158 ft. Draft of Water, 11 to 14 ft. }
 Width of Dock, 32 ft.

SIMPSON'S PATENT DRY DOCK,

MARGINAL STREET, EAST BOSTON.

We would respectfully call your attention to the facilities offered by this Dock for the Docking of Vessels. In constructing this Dock, the original solid clay is retained as the foundation on which the Vessel rests, and all danger to the Vessel, from the uneven condition of her bottom, or from her weight, is avoided. Vessels, in any condition, can safely be taken into this Dock. On the premises are to be found Blacksmiths, Joiners, Painters, Spar Makers, and Riggers.

RATES OF DOCKAGE.

Docking Vessels, 15 cents per Ton, Register Tonnage. } 750 Tons and under.
 Lay Days,.....5 cents per Ton, Register Tonnage. }
 Large Dock. { Docking, 20 cents. } Over 750 Tons.
 Lay Days, 8 cents. }
 Propellers, under 500 Tons, 15 cents per Ton Dockage, and 5 cents per Lay Day.
 Propellers, over 500 Tons, 35 cents Dockage per Ton, and 9 cents per Ton Lay Days.
 All Vessels under 200 Tons, \$30 Dockage, and \$10 per day Repairing.
 Nothing less than a half day to be charged in any case.

Lay Days commences from the time the Vessel is ready to go to work on. From these rates there will be no variation, and all Dock Bills are cash. Application can be made at the office of the Superintendent, No. 223 Commercial Street, or at the Dock.

S. B. HOBART, SUPERINTENDENT.

REFERENCES:

BAKER & MORRILL,.....	Boston.	D. D. KELLEY,.....	Boston.	D. C. MAGOUN, ESQ.,.....	BAYNE.
F. NICKERSON & CO.,.....	"	HOWLAND & FROTHINGHAM,.....	New York.	WM. MCGILVER, ESQ.,.....	SPRINGPORT, ME.
SAMPSON & TAPPAN,.....	"	H. HASTING,.....	"	N. G. HITCHBORN, ESQ.,.....	PROSPECT, ME.
CHARLES PEARSON, Marine Inspector,.....	"	HOWES & CROWELL,.....	"	PENDLETON & ROSS,.....	BANGOR, ME.
G. C. LORU,.....	"	D. L. CHUTE, ESQ.,.....	Portland, ME.	A. K. SPEAR, ESQ.,.....	ROSELAND, ME.
THACHER MAGOUN,.....	"	THOS. McLELLAN, ESQ.,.....	"	JOSIAH SIMPSON, ESQ.,.....	BRISTOL, ME.

Persons desiring information concerning, or to contract for the construction of, Simpson's Patent Dry Docks, will please address

JAMES E. SIMPSON,

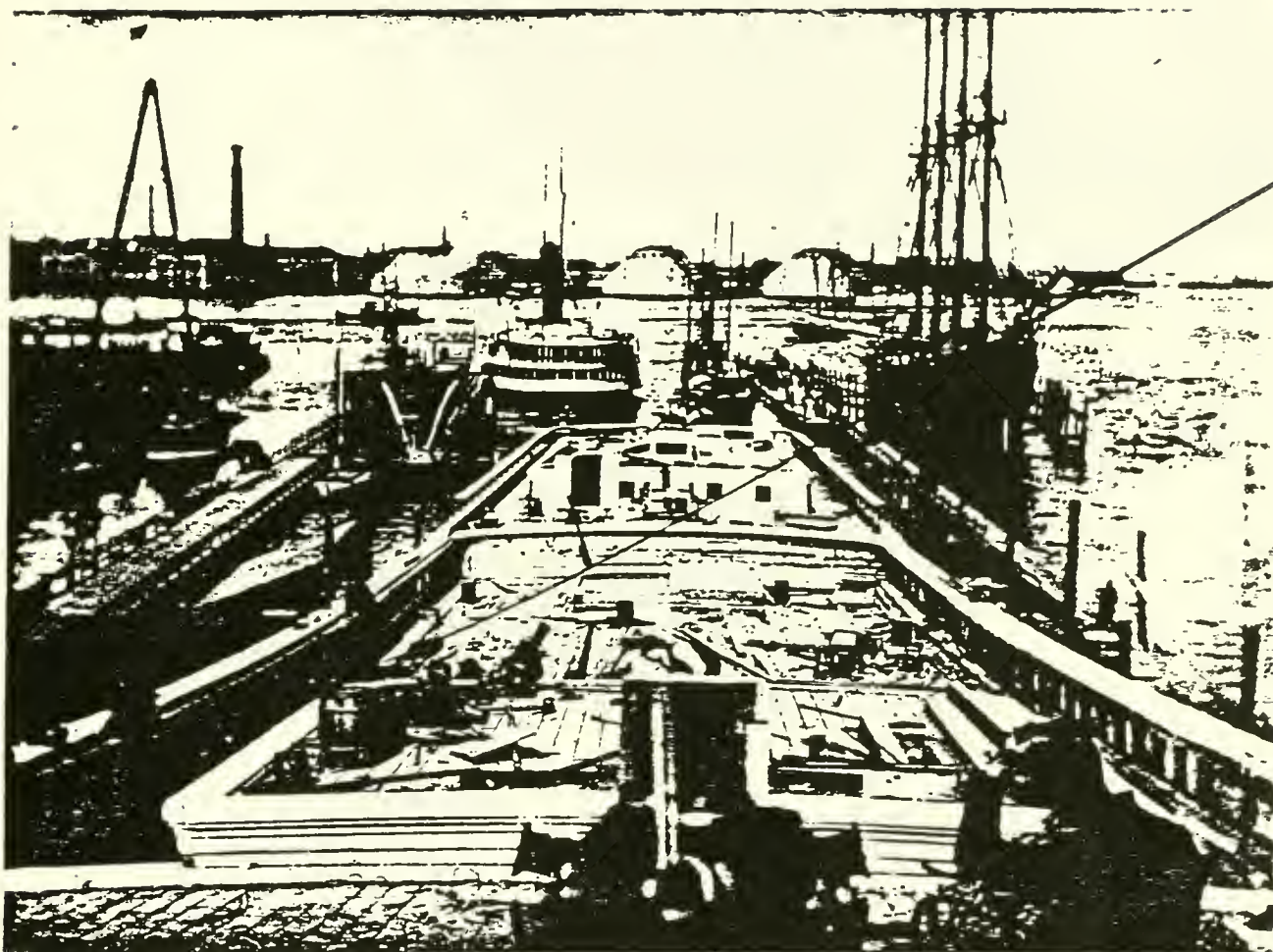
No. 49 Chelsea Street, East Boston.

Fort Hill Dry Docks, Jas. Dillon,
327 Broad

Pioneer Dry Dock, Burchstead &
Leavitt, agents, 189 Broad

Sectional Dock, E. B., B. Thomas,
agent, 65 State

Simpson's Patent Dry Docks, E. B.
S. B. Hobart, supt. 223 Comm



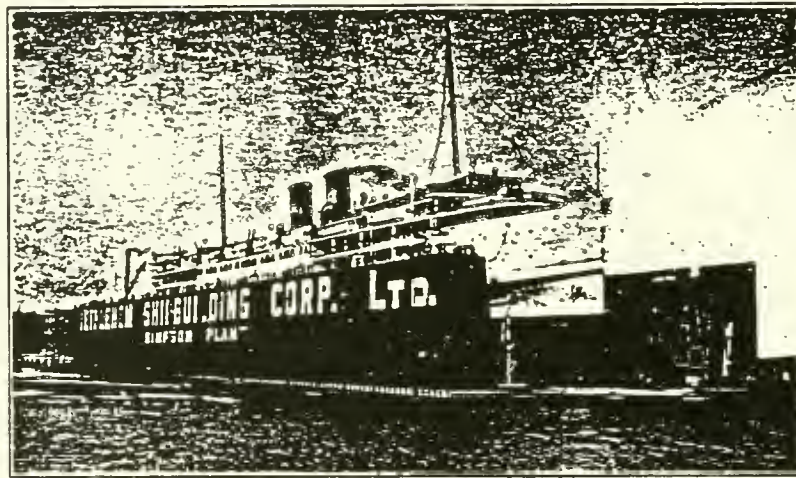
MCKIE'S

DRYDOCKS

Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation, Ltd.

Fore River Plant, Quincy, Mass.

Simpson Dry Dock Plant, East Boston, Mass.



Complete Ship Construction and Repair Facilities

The many years' experience of the Fore River and Simpson Dry Dock Plants backed by the extensive facilities of the Bethlehem organization are a guarantee of 100 per cent service.

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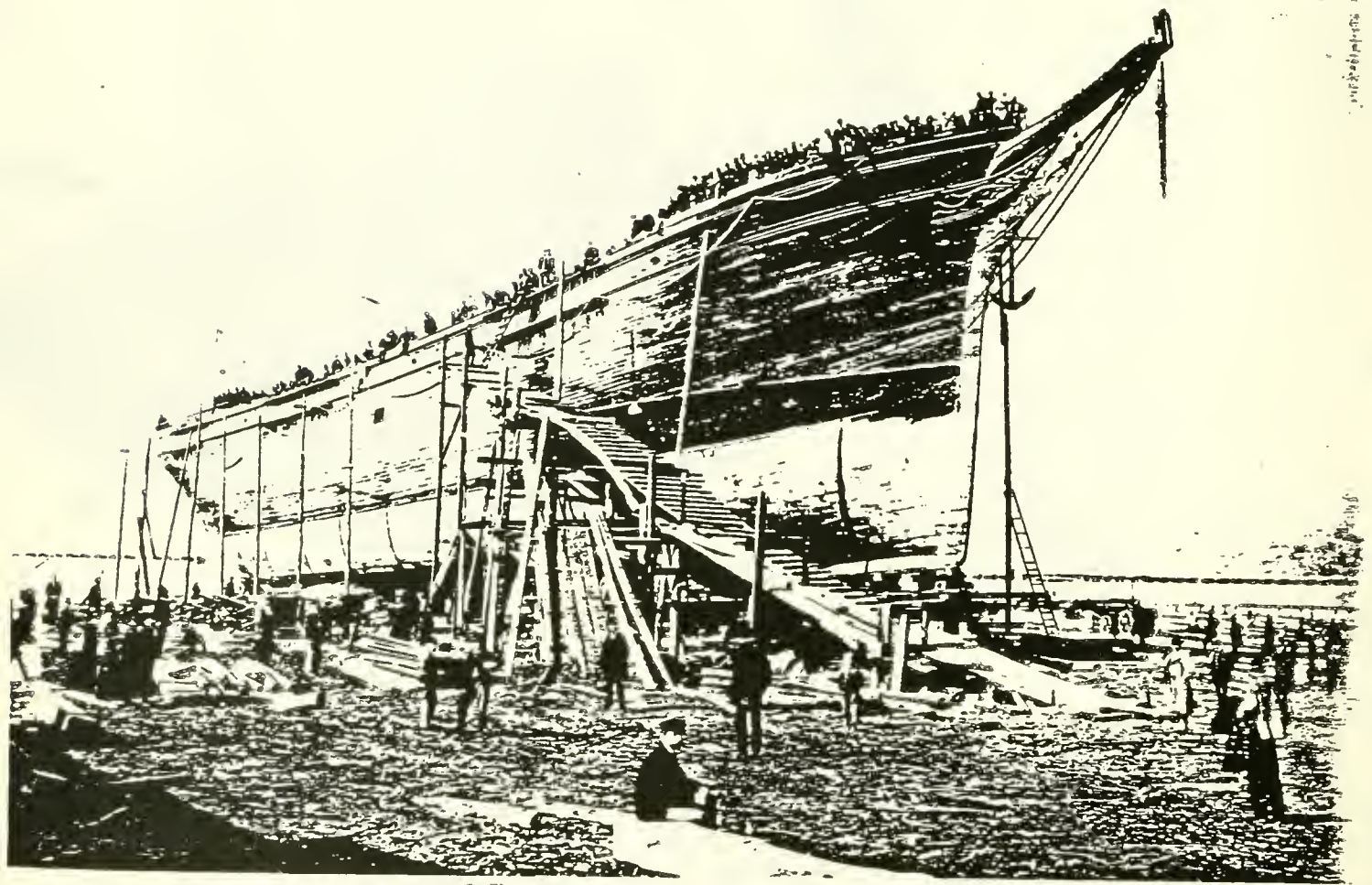
MCKAYS DOCK

MCKAY

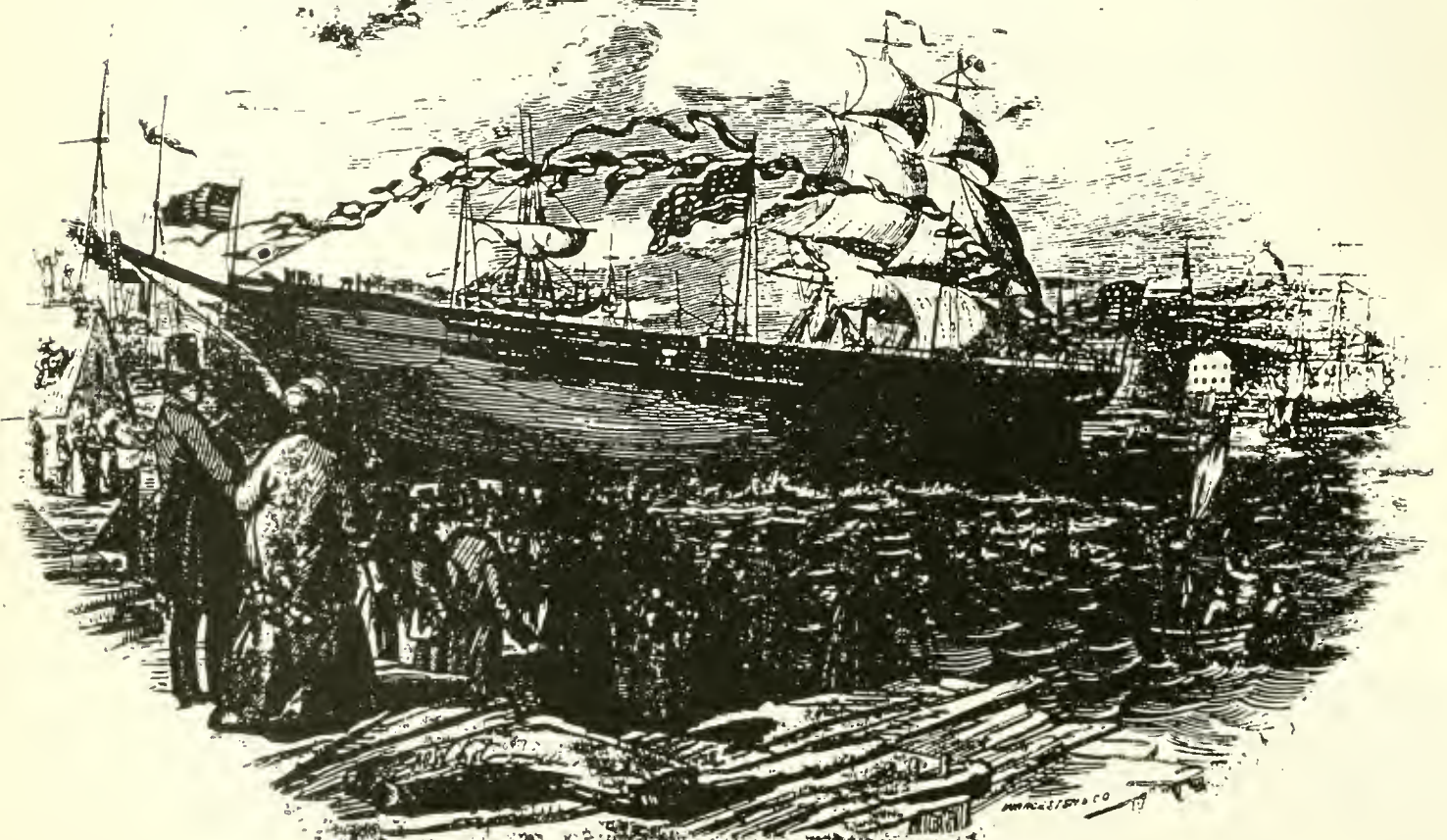


"CHAMPION OF THE SEAS"



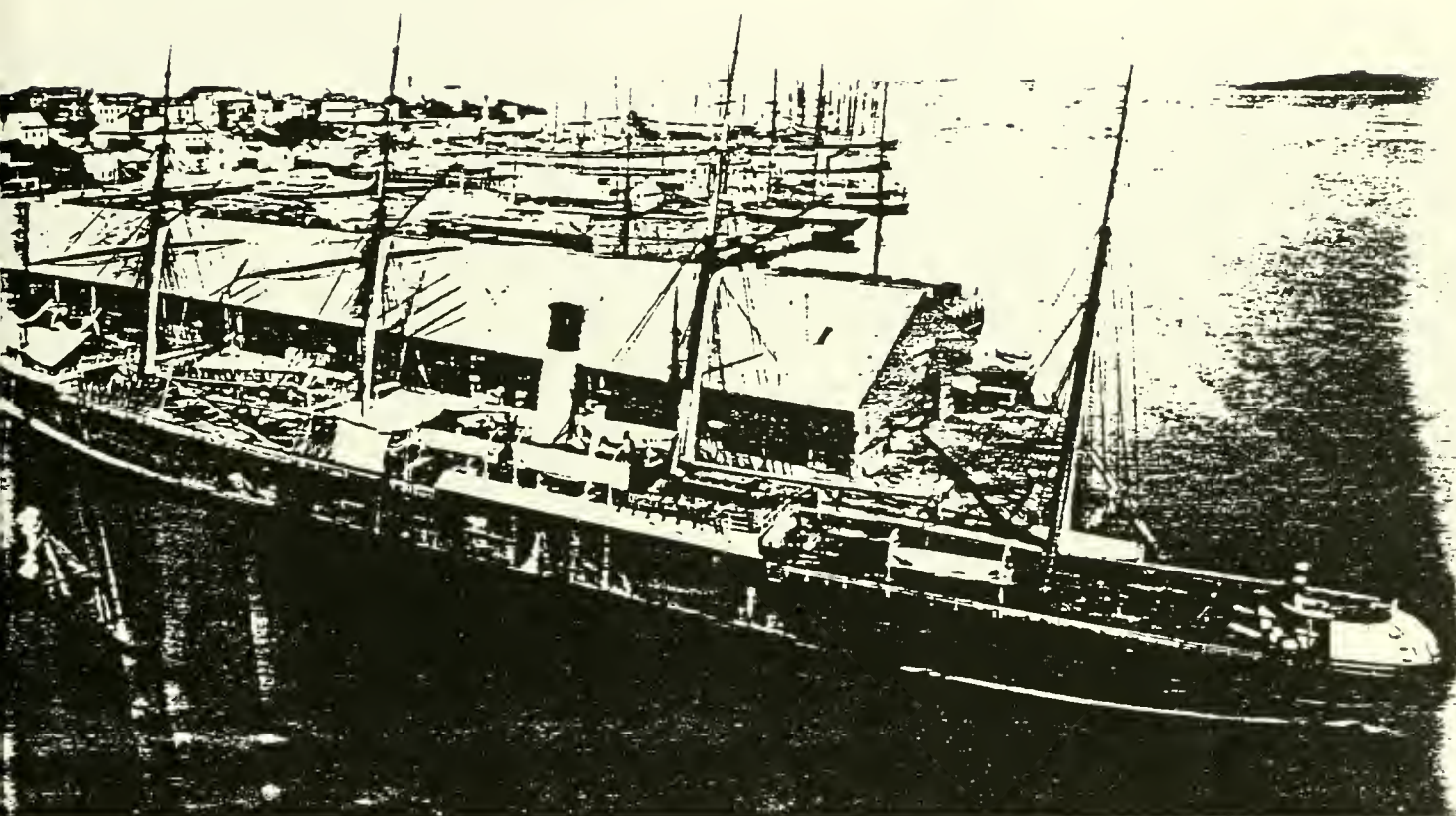


GLORY OF THE SEAS*

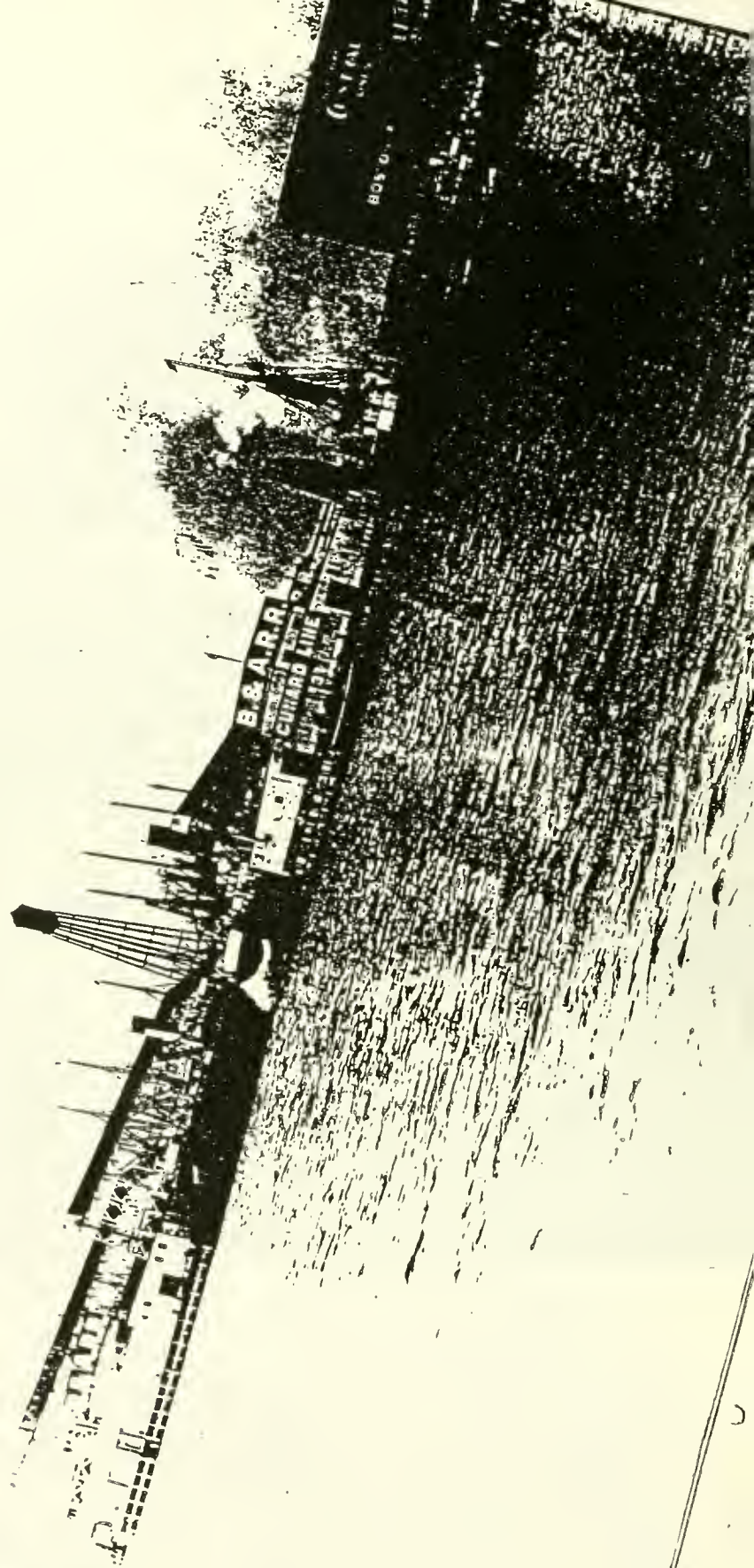


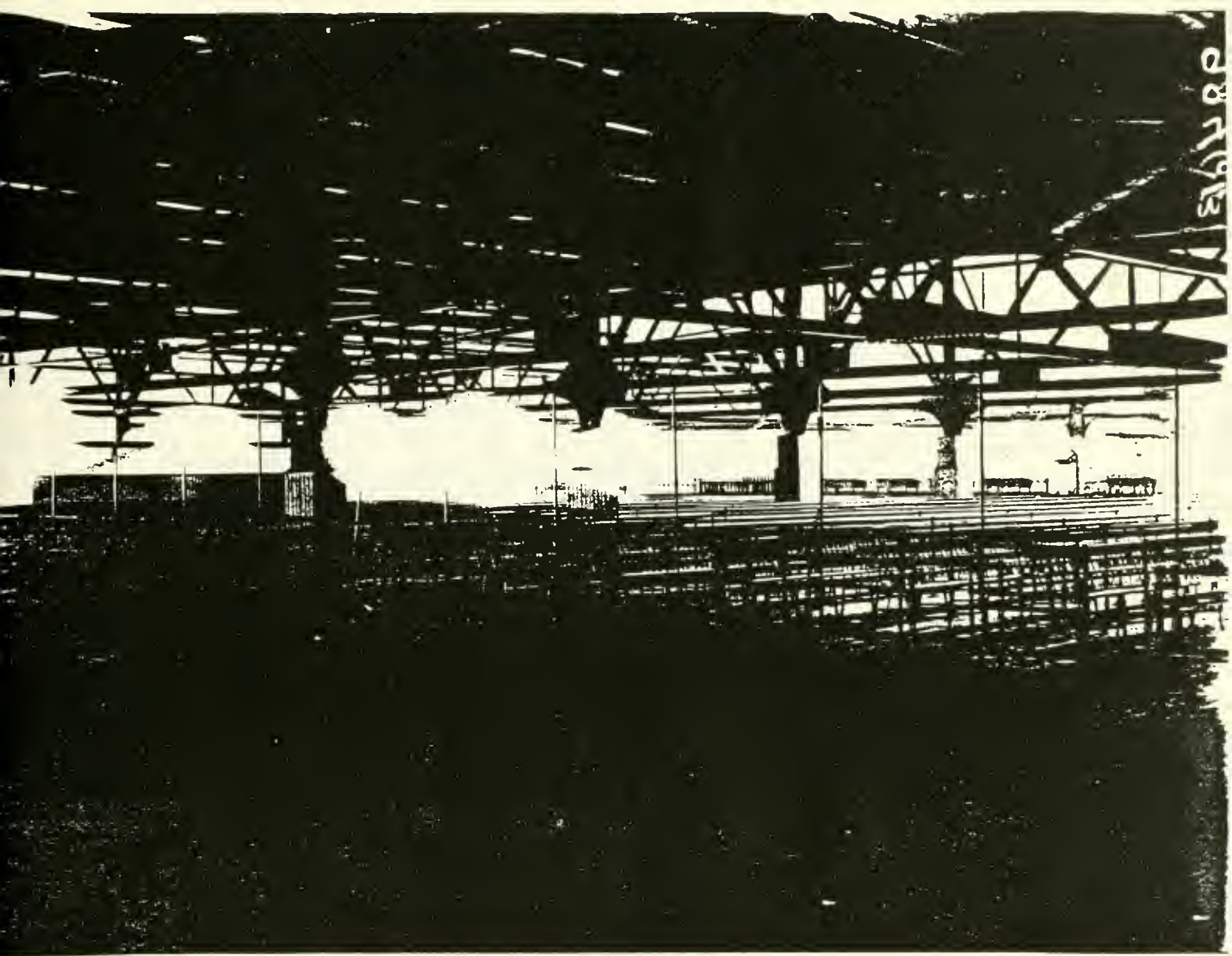
AT BART BOSTON, MASS.

STEAM SHIPS



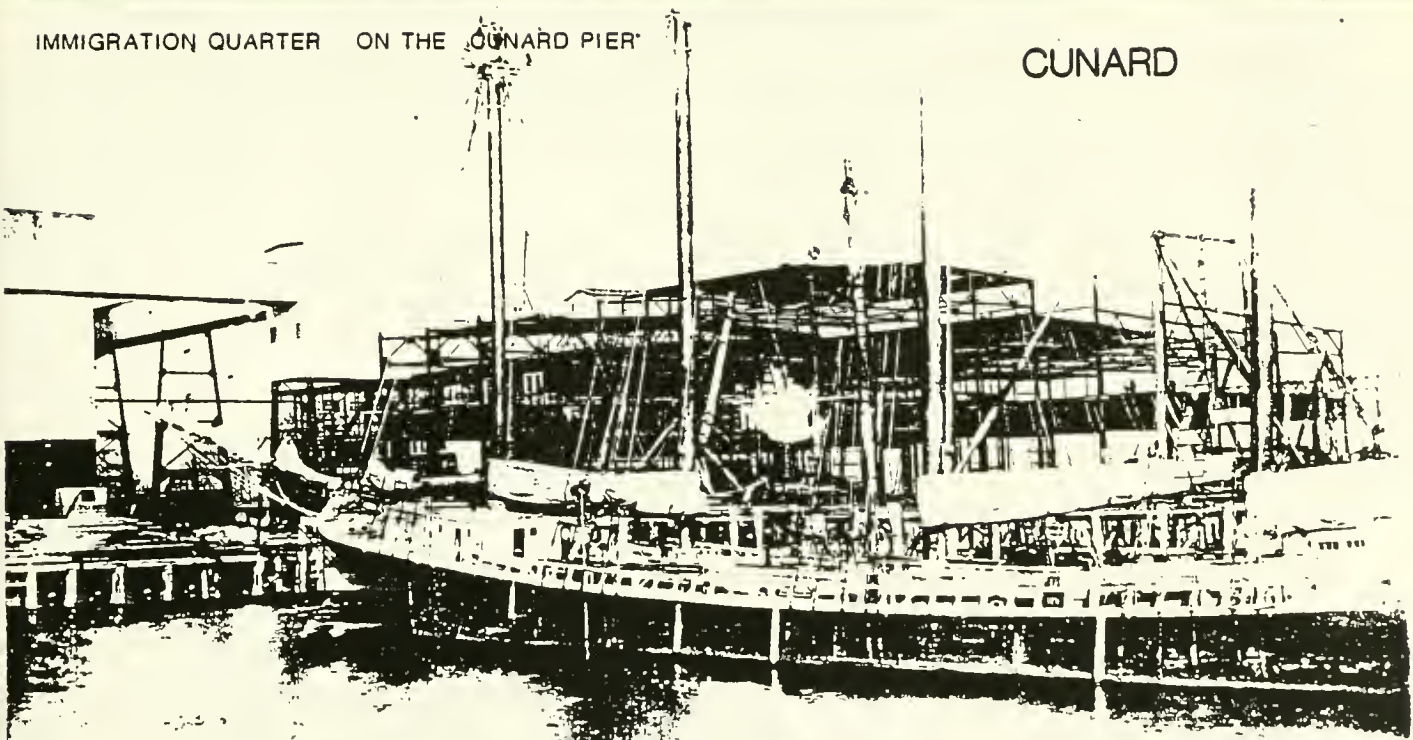
LYLAND CARGO LINER

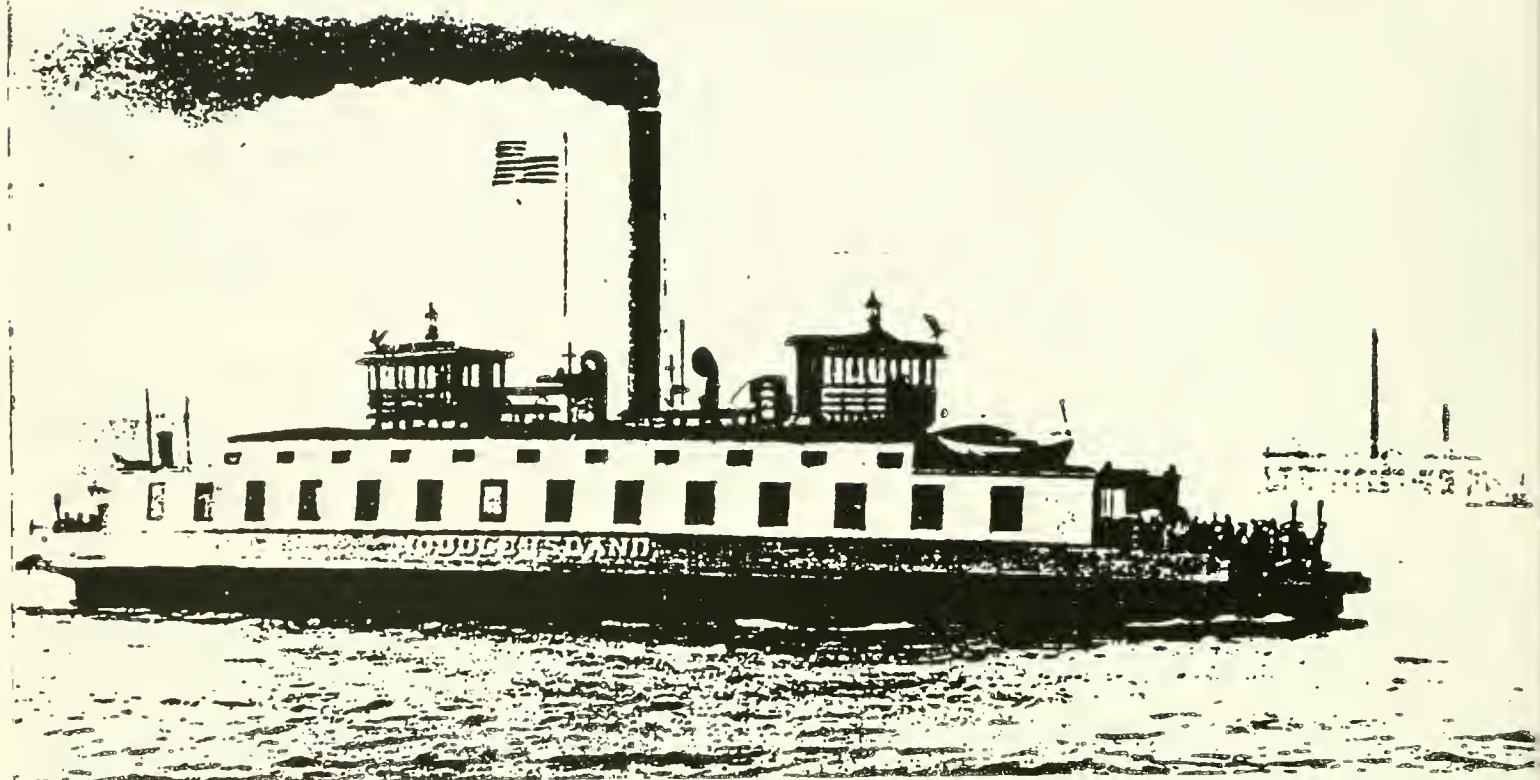




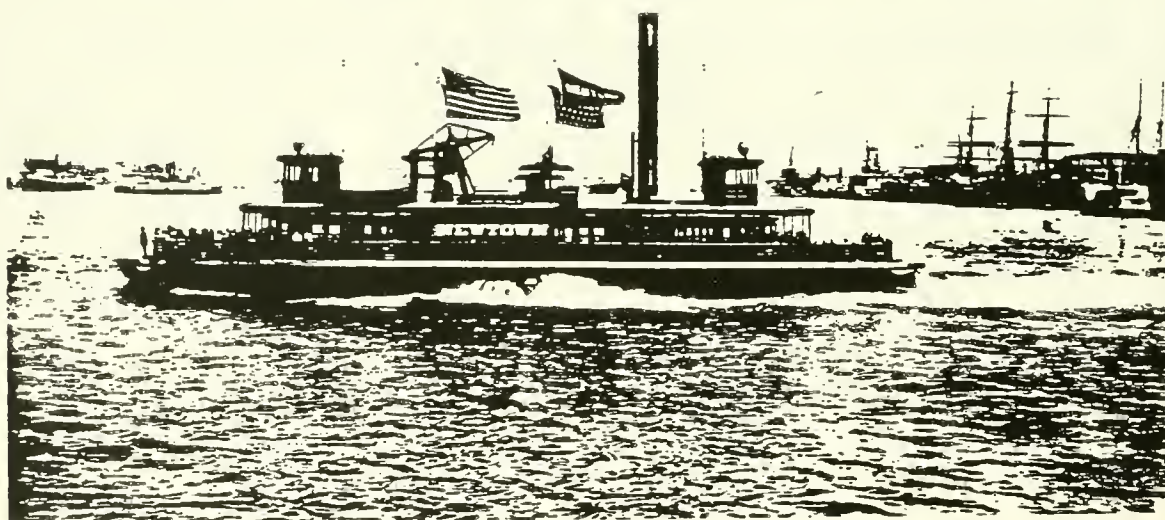
IMMIGRATION QUARTER ON THE CUNARD PIER

CUNARD

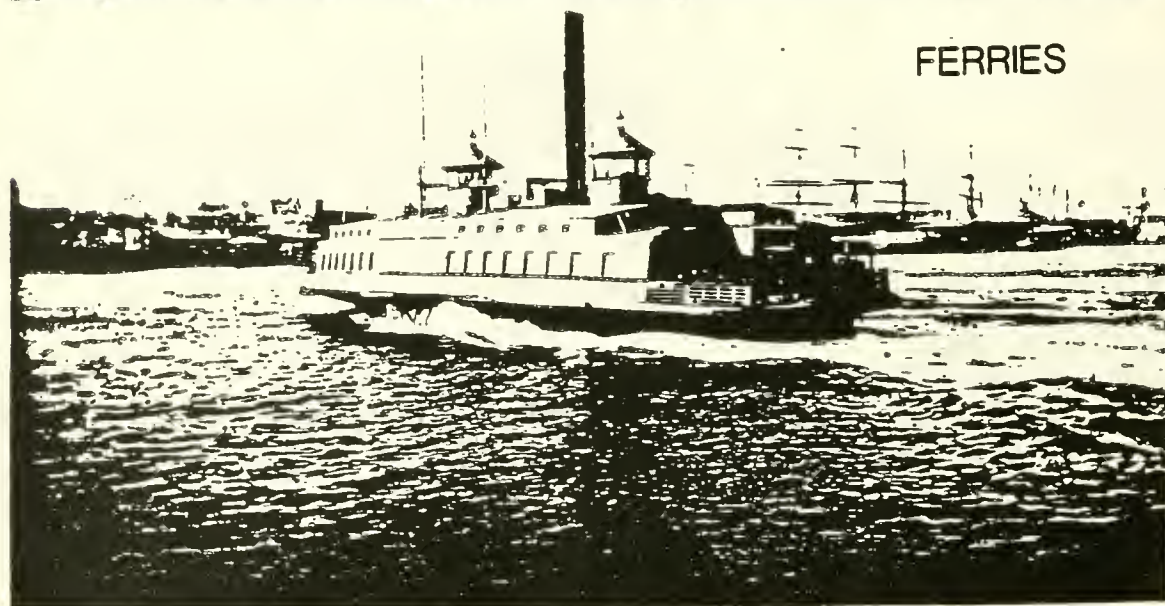




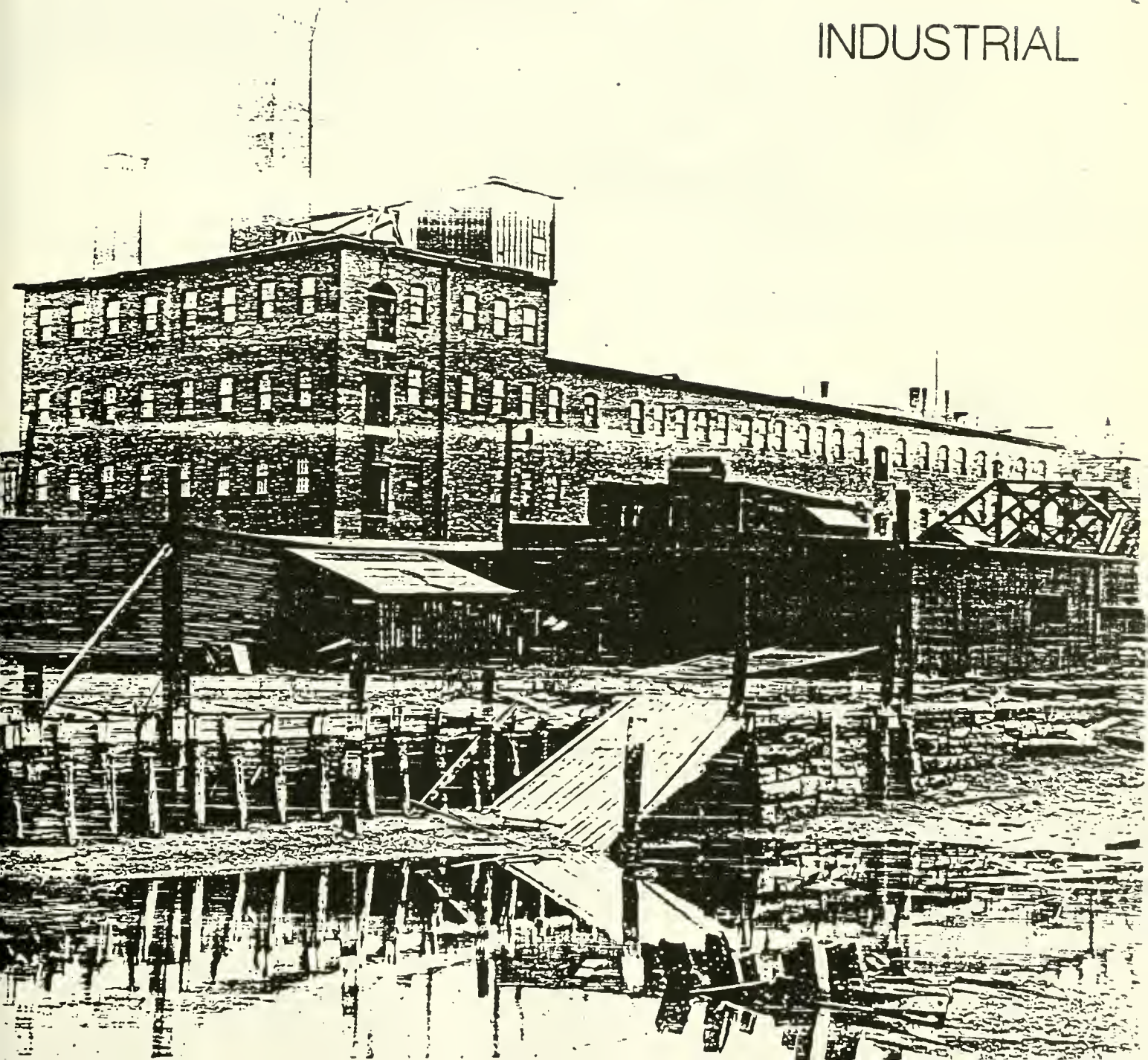
North Ferry

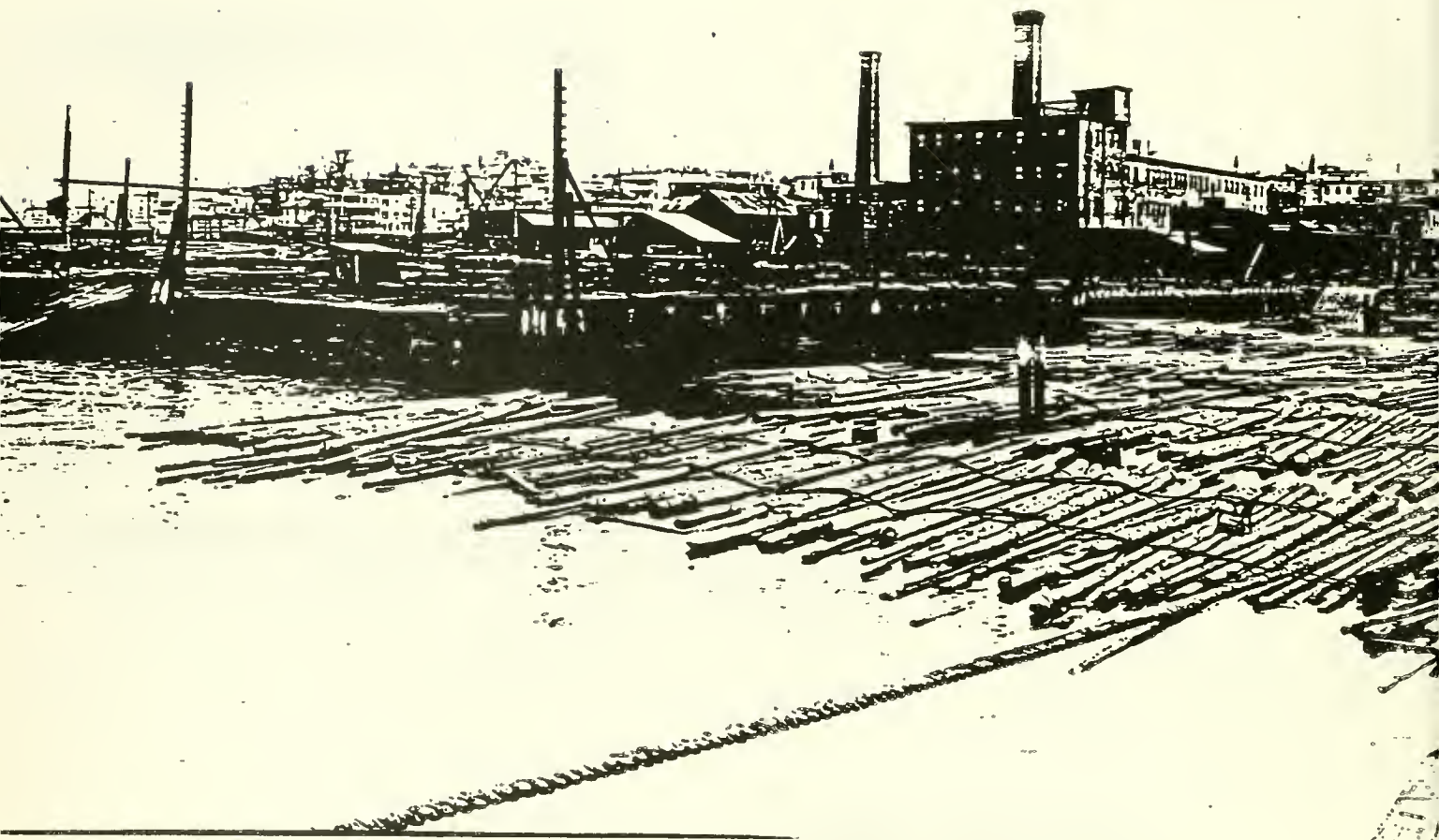


FERRIES



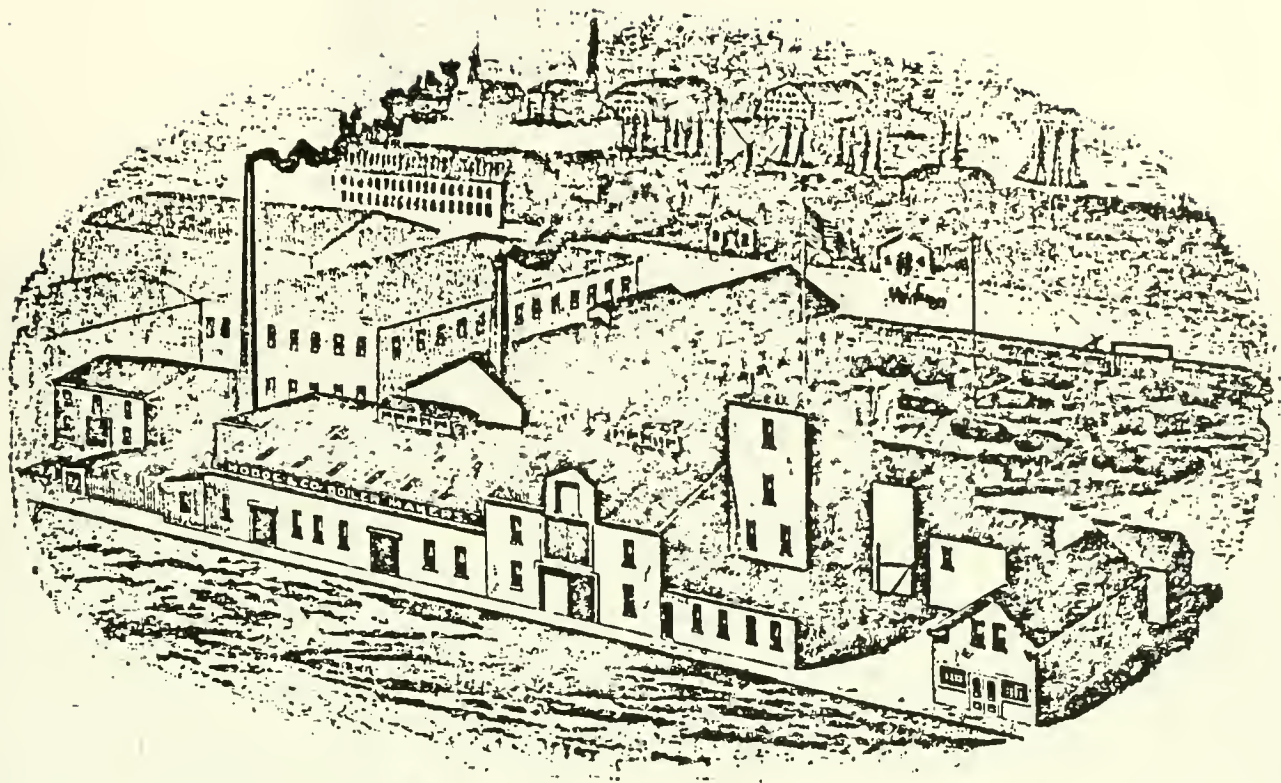
INDUSTRIAL





BORDER STREET





E. HODGE & CO., _____

JOHN E. LYNCH, Proprietor.

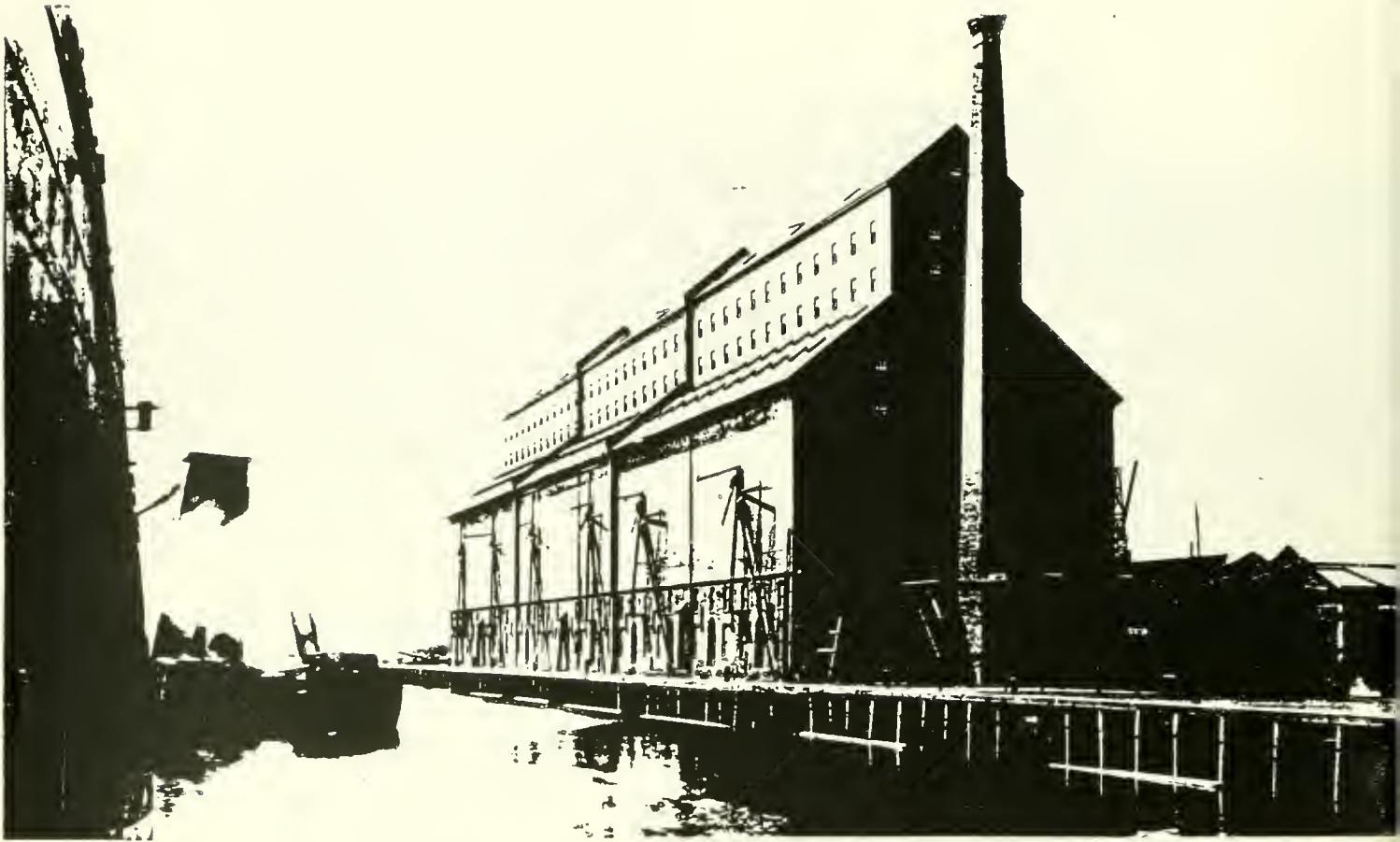
MANUFACTURERS
OF Marine and Stationary **BOILERS,**

STANDPIPES. OIL AND SHIP TANKS. ALL KINDS OF PLATE IRON WORK.

Liverpool Street, East Boston.

COAL





OLD GRAIN ELEVATOR



OLD GRANITE WAREHOUSE

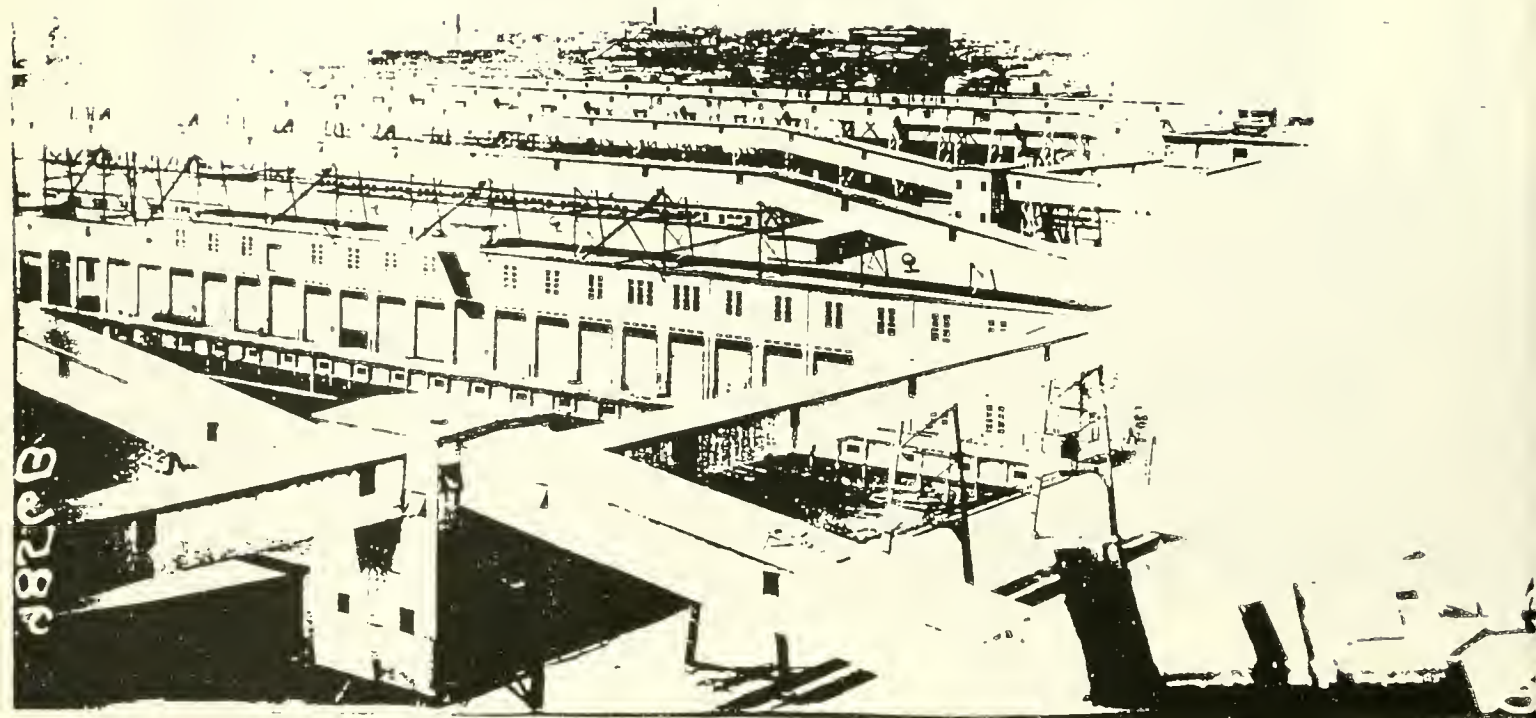


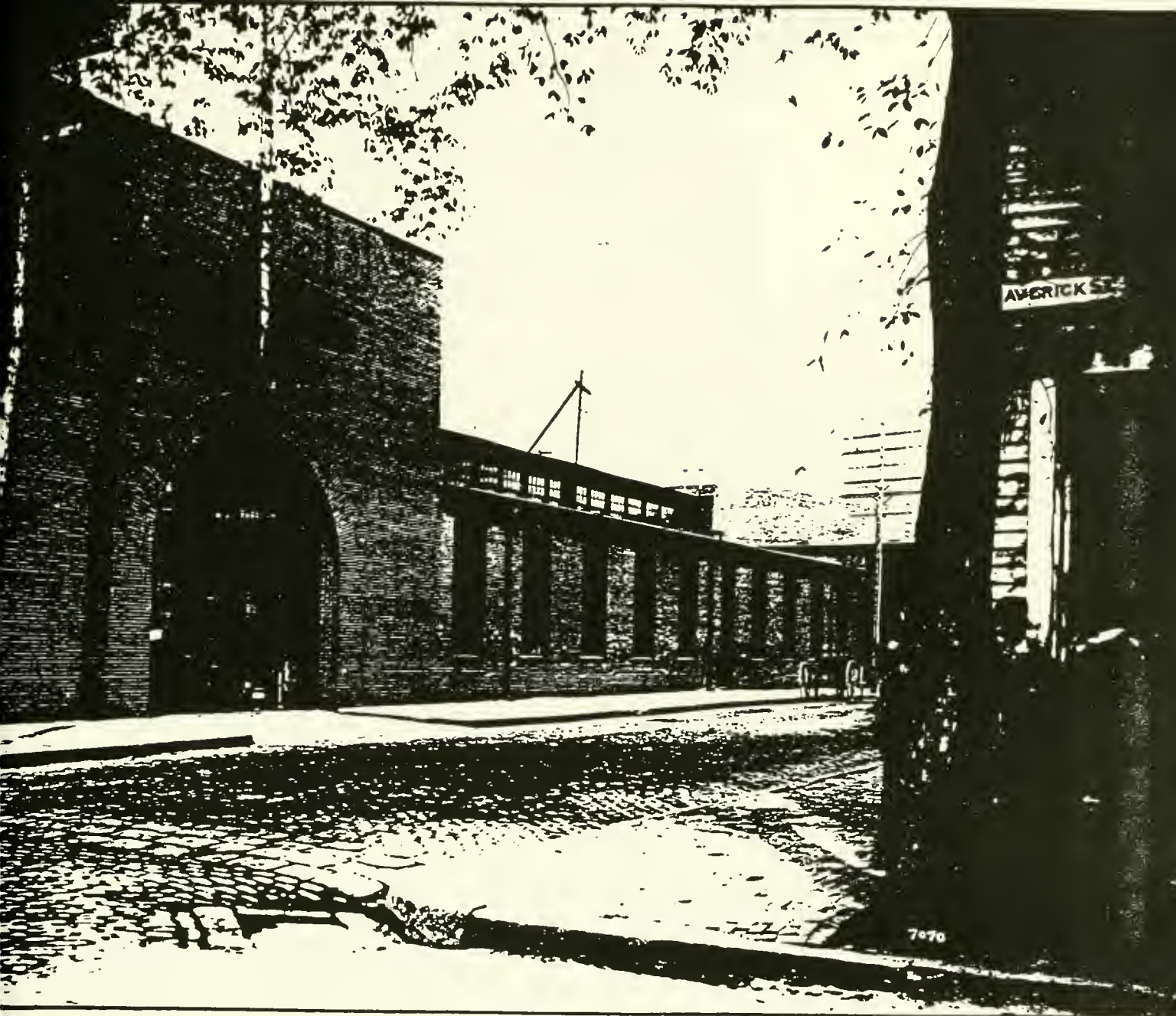
GRAIN ELEVATORS



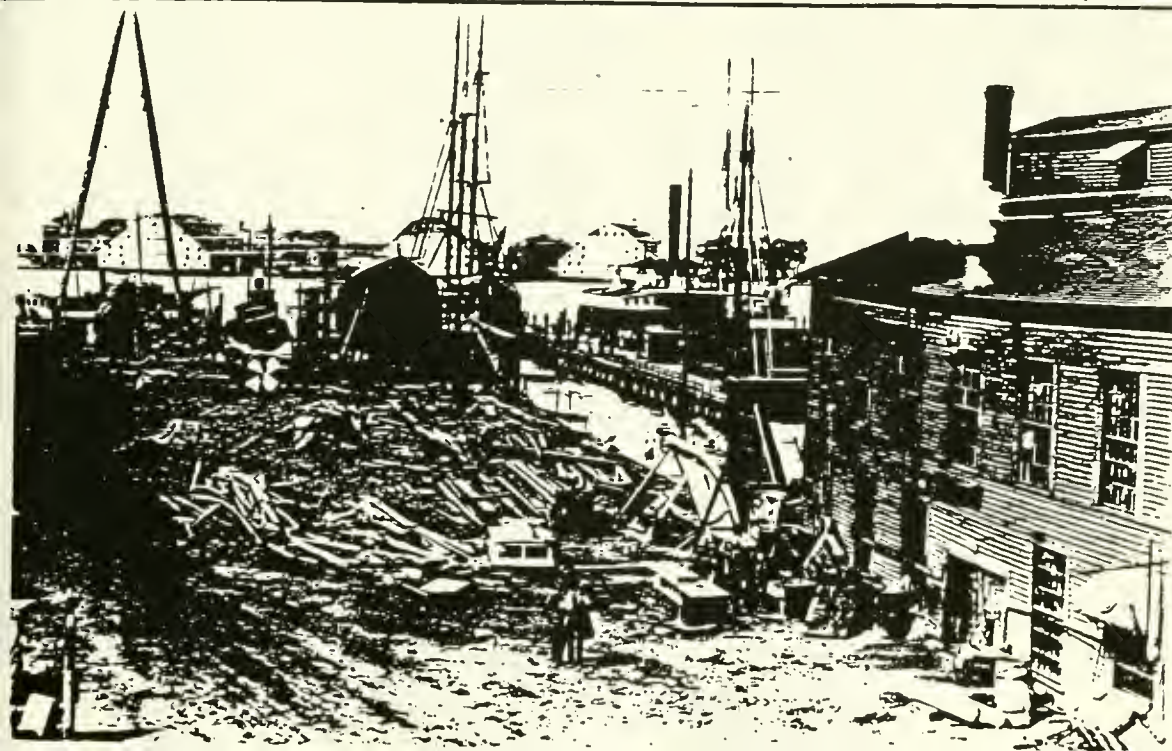


GRAIN CONVEYORS



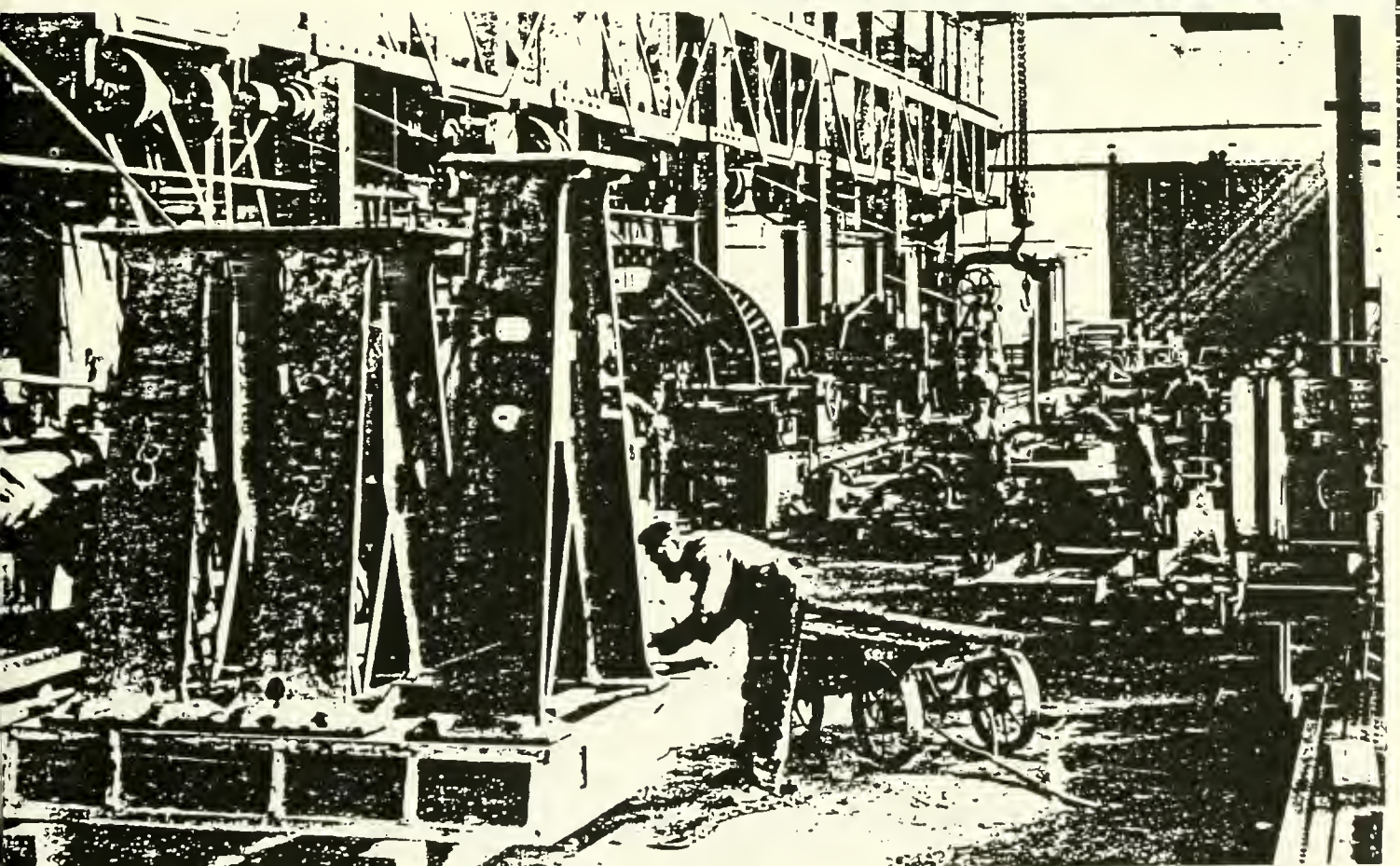
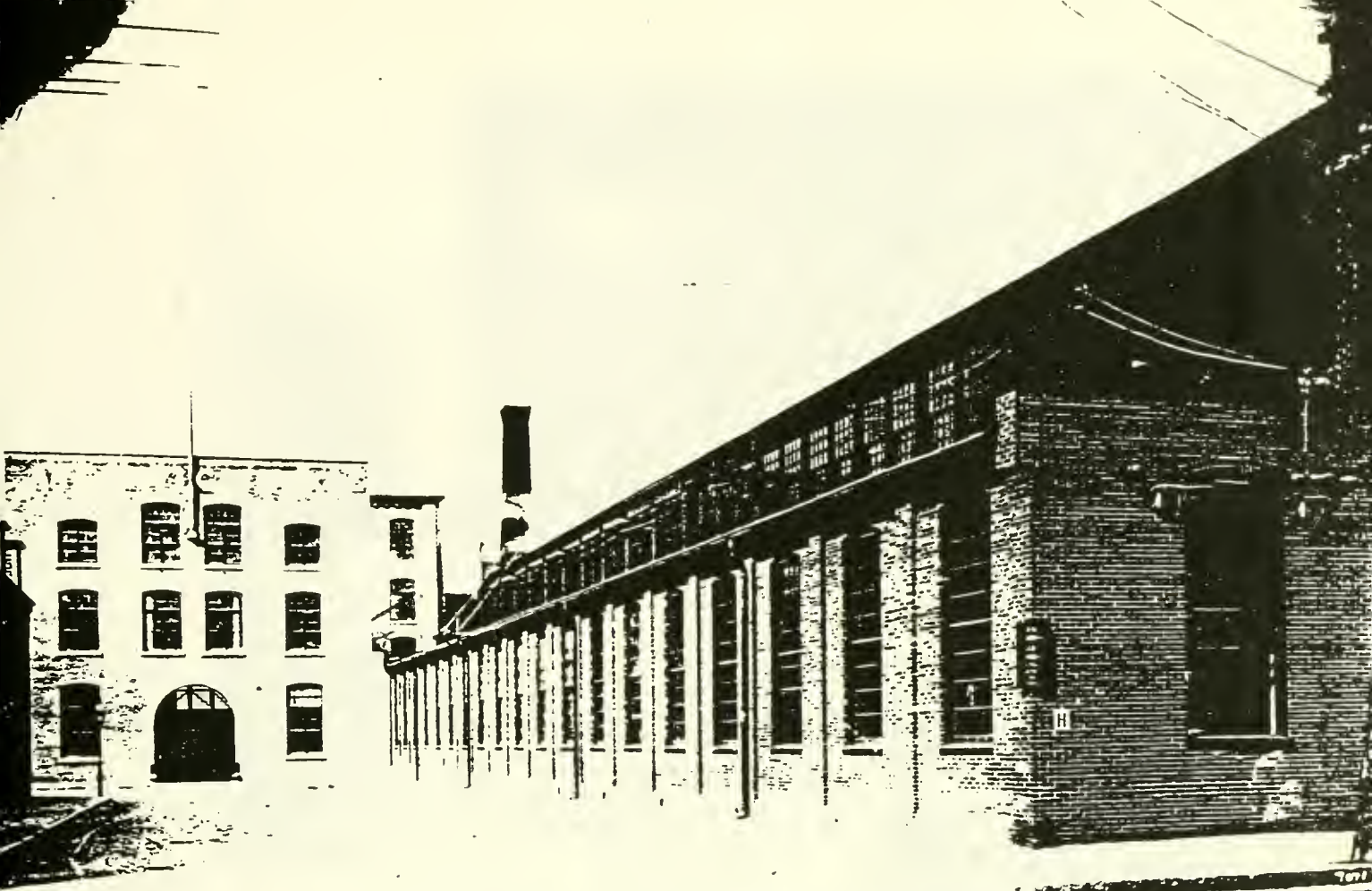


ATLANTIC



ATLANTIC WORKS





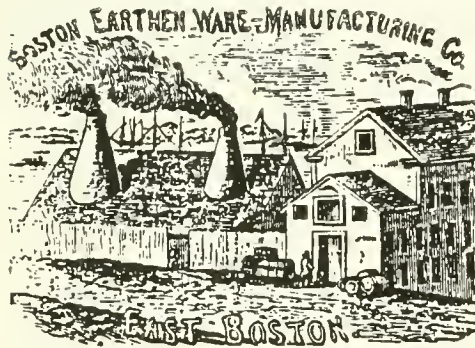
The Atlantic Works



LUMBER

ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT.

19

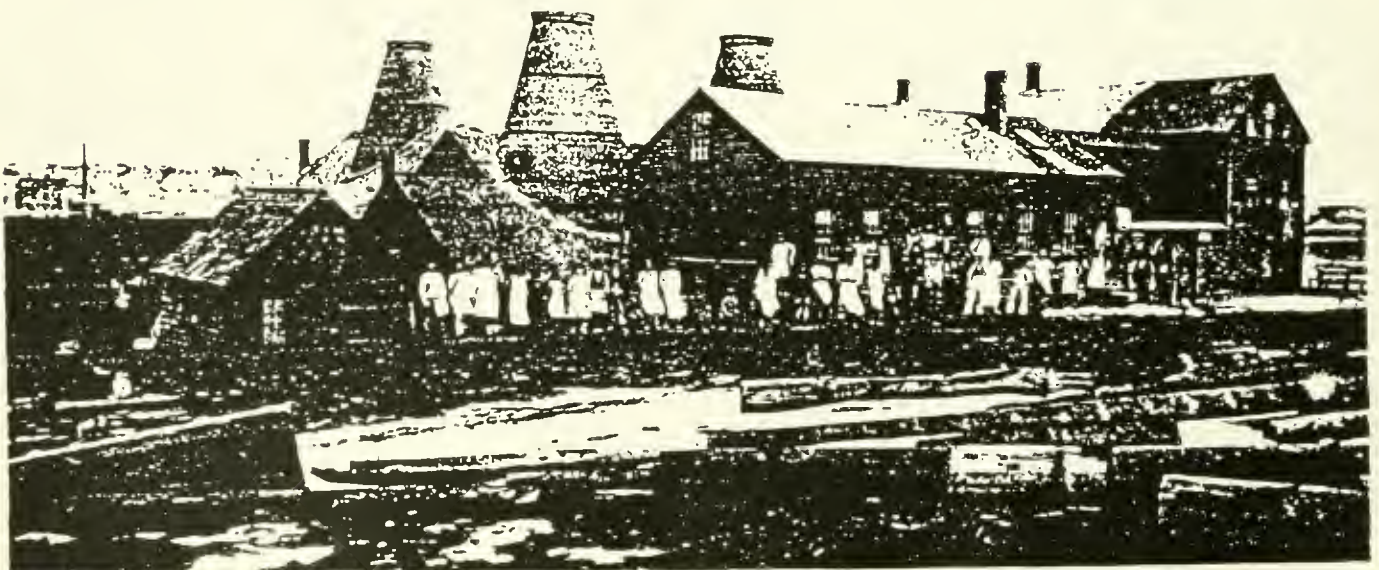


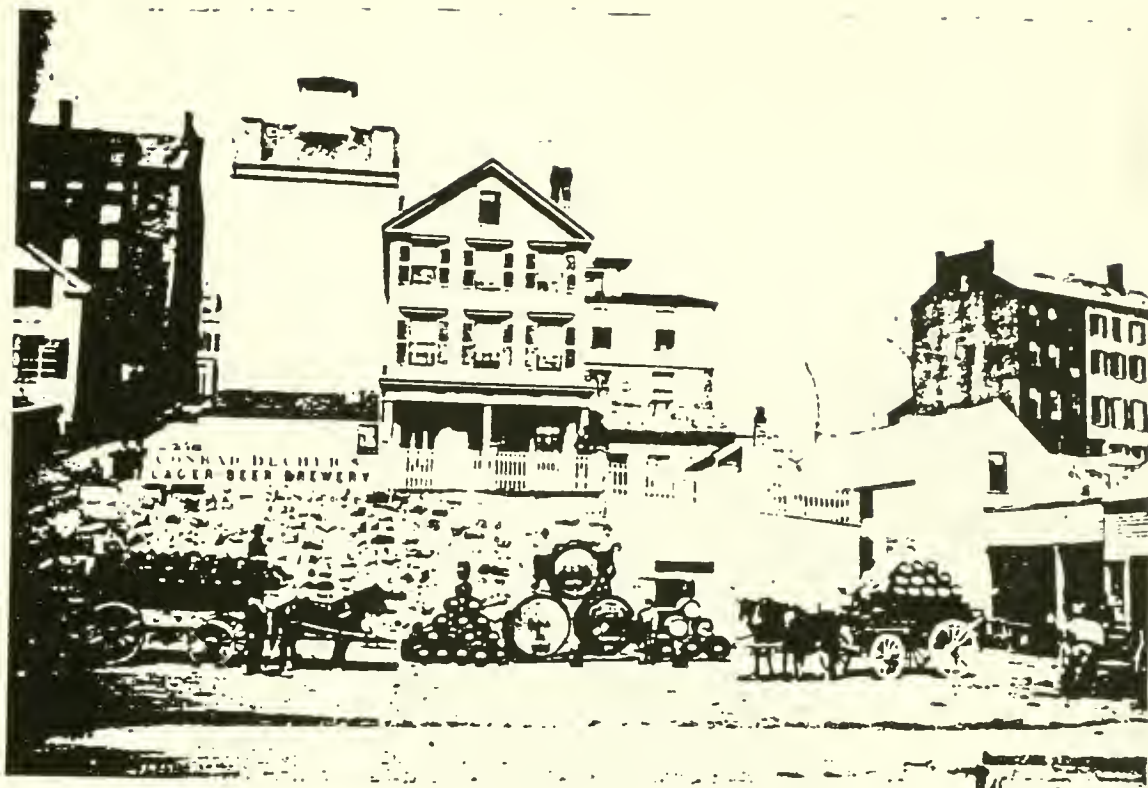
Wares made at this Factory are for Sale by
WM. F. HOMER & CO.,
 15 & 17 UNION ST.,
 BOSTON.

Samples at Office, 15 Union St., where
 Orders are received, or at the Works, on
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FREDERICK MEAR,
 AGENT.

POTTERY

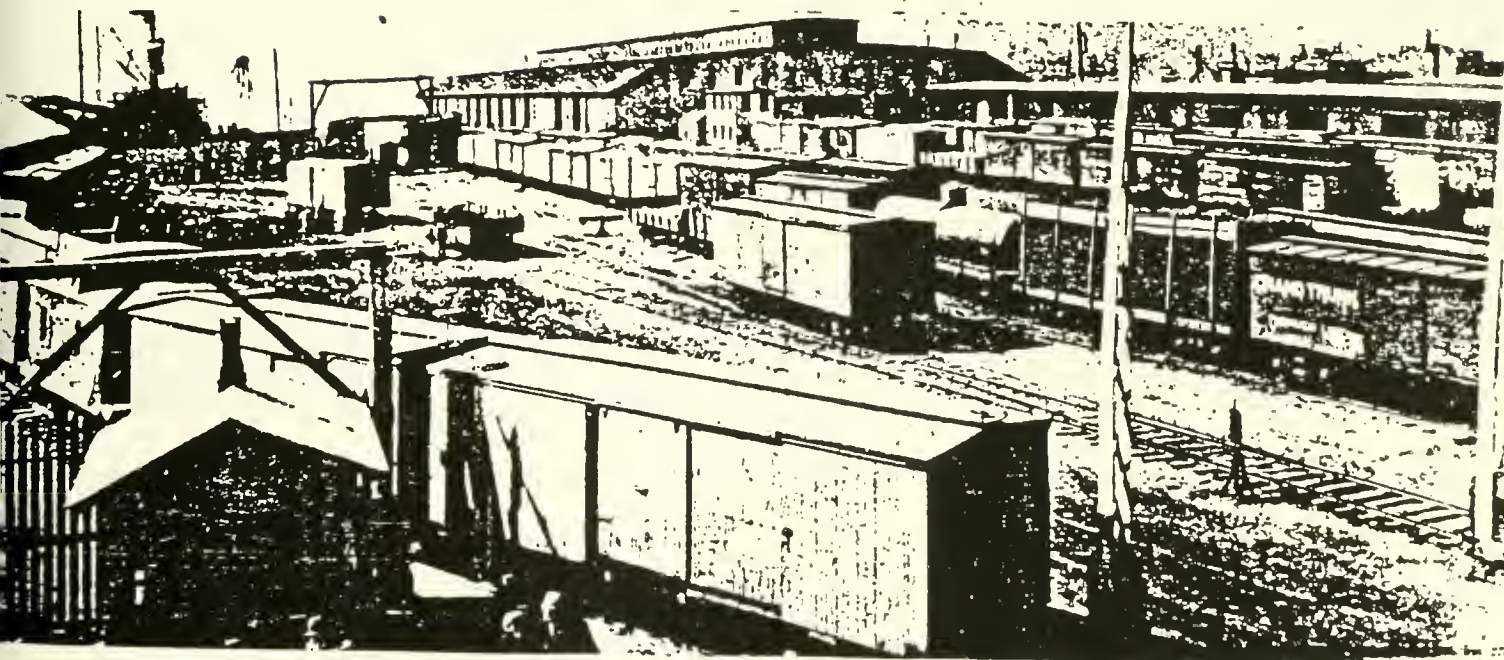




*Conrad Decher
Brewery, c. 1890*

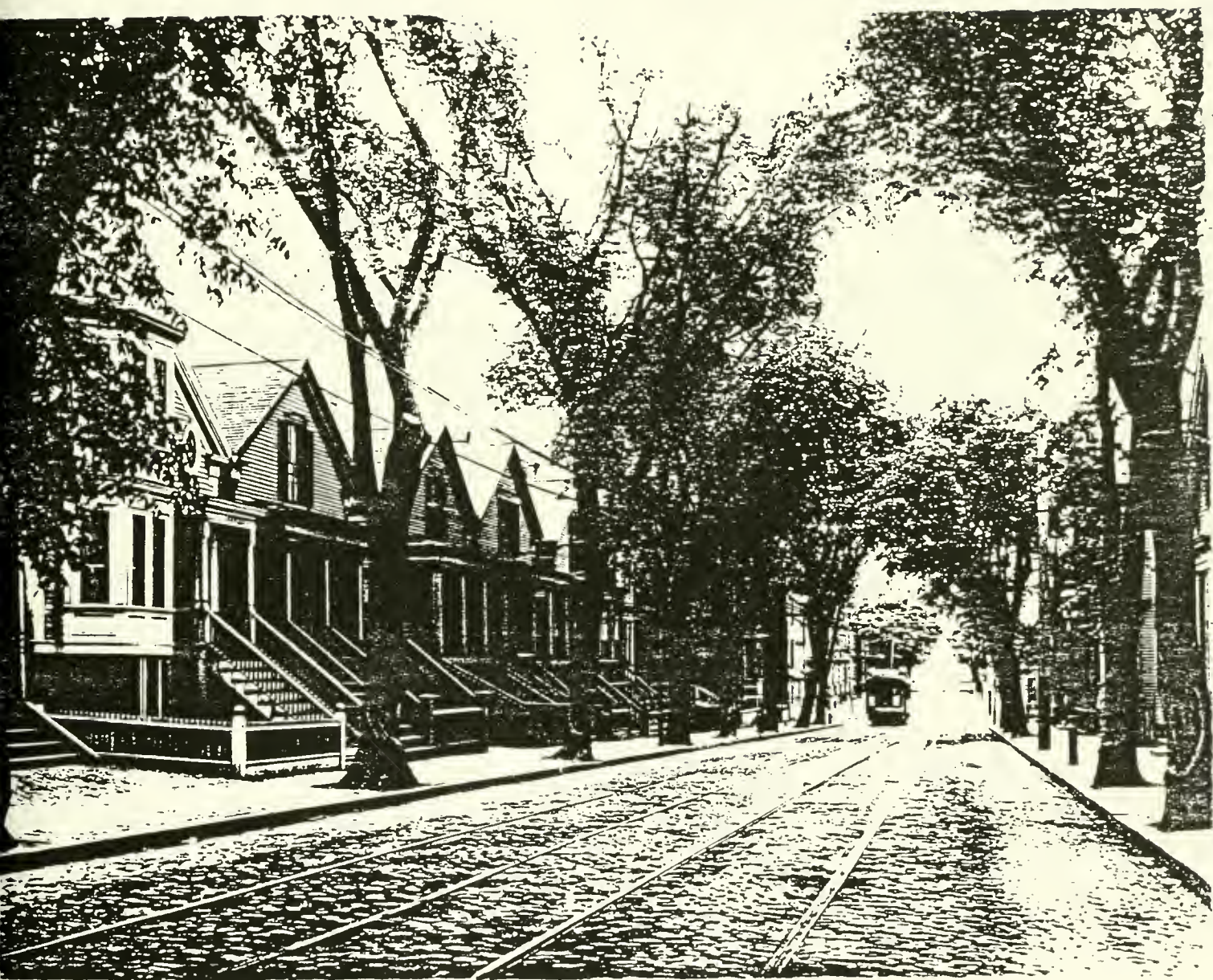
BREWERY

RAILROADS



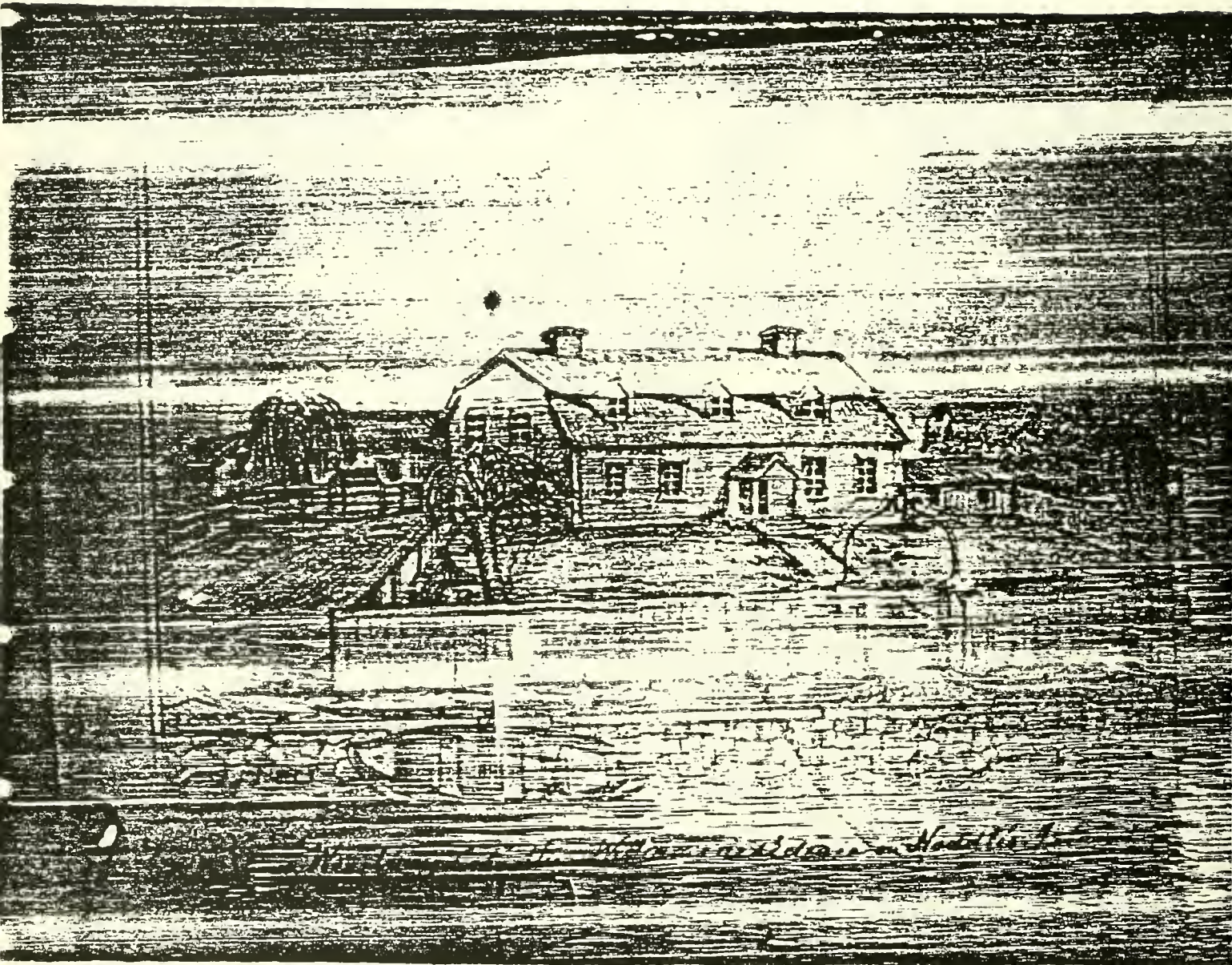
Ocean Terminus of the Boston and Maine R. R., 1897



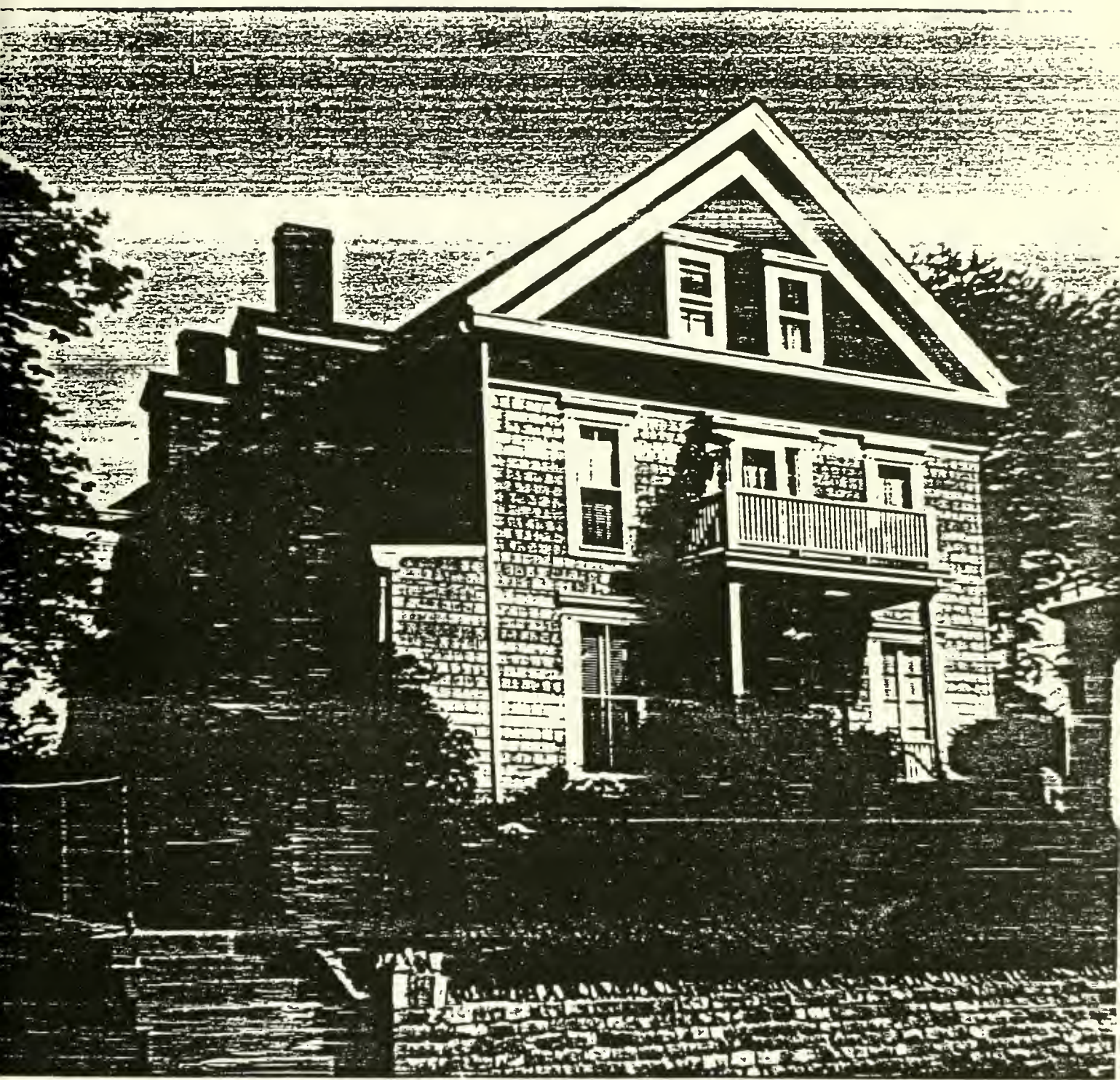


LEXINGTON STREET

HOMES



FIRST HOUSE ON NOODLE ISLAND

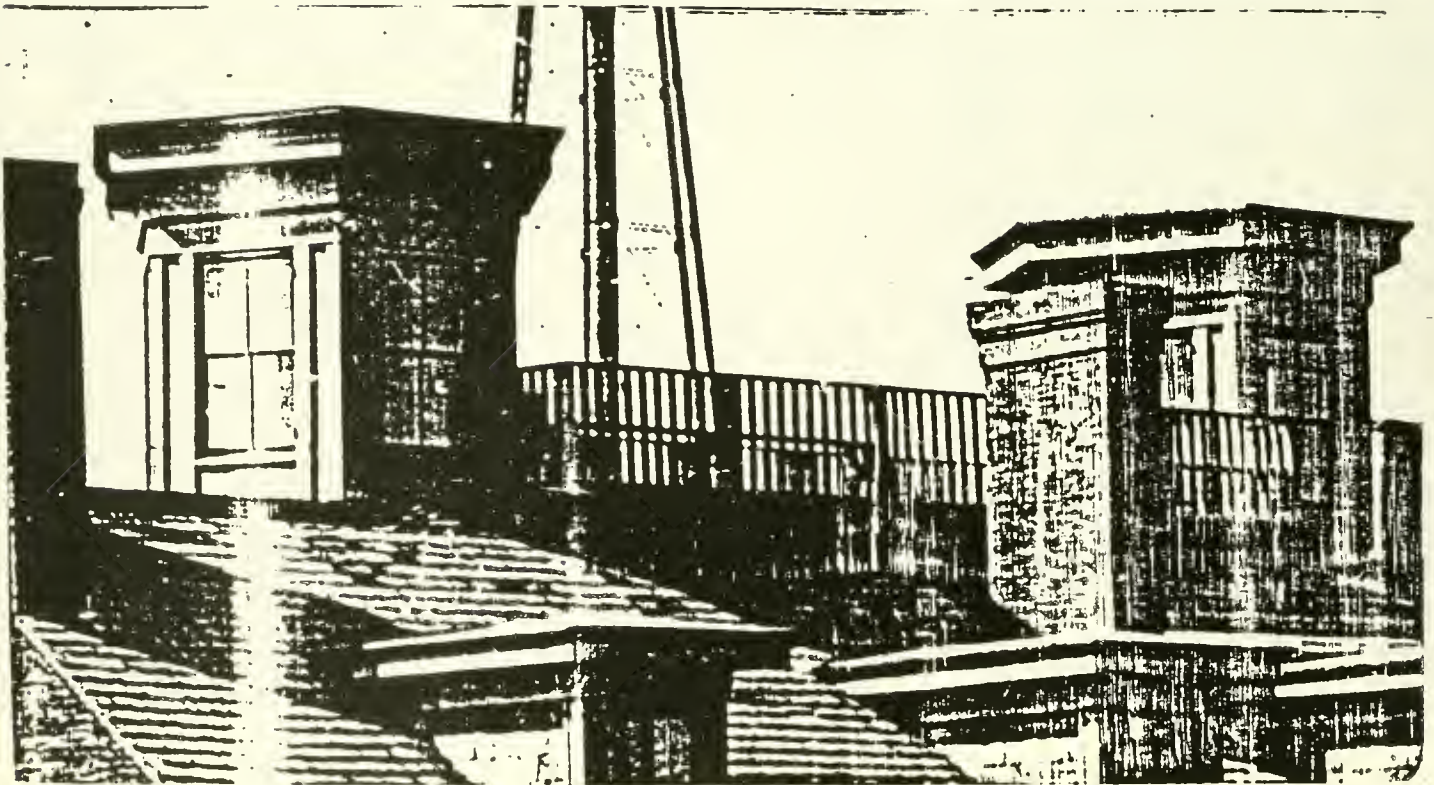


FORMER HOME OF MCKAY

SHIP BUILDERS HOME



IMMIGRANTS HOME





MERIDIAN STREET



TRINITY NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE



CENTRAL SQUARE BAPTIST

CHURCHS

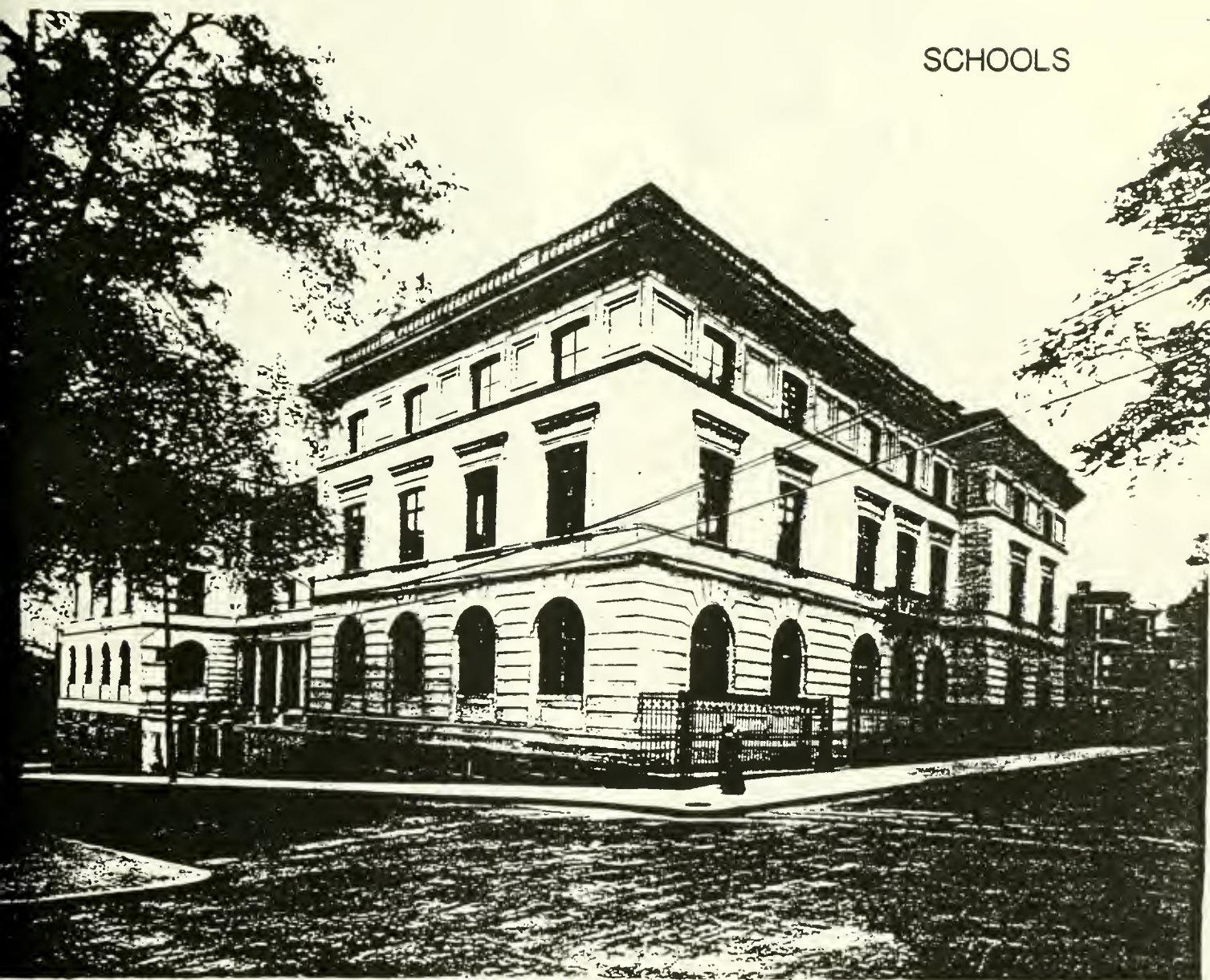
MOST HOLY REDEEMER



MERIDIAN STREET METHODIST



SCHOOLS



THE HIGH SCHOOL



LYMAN SCHOOL



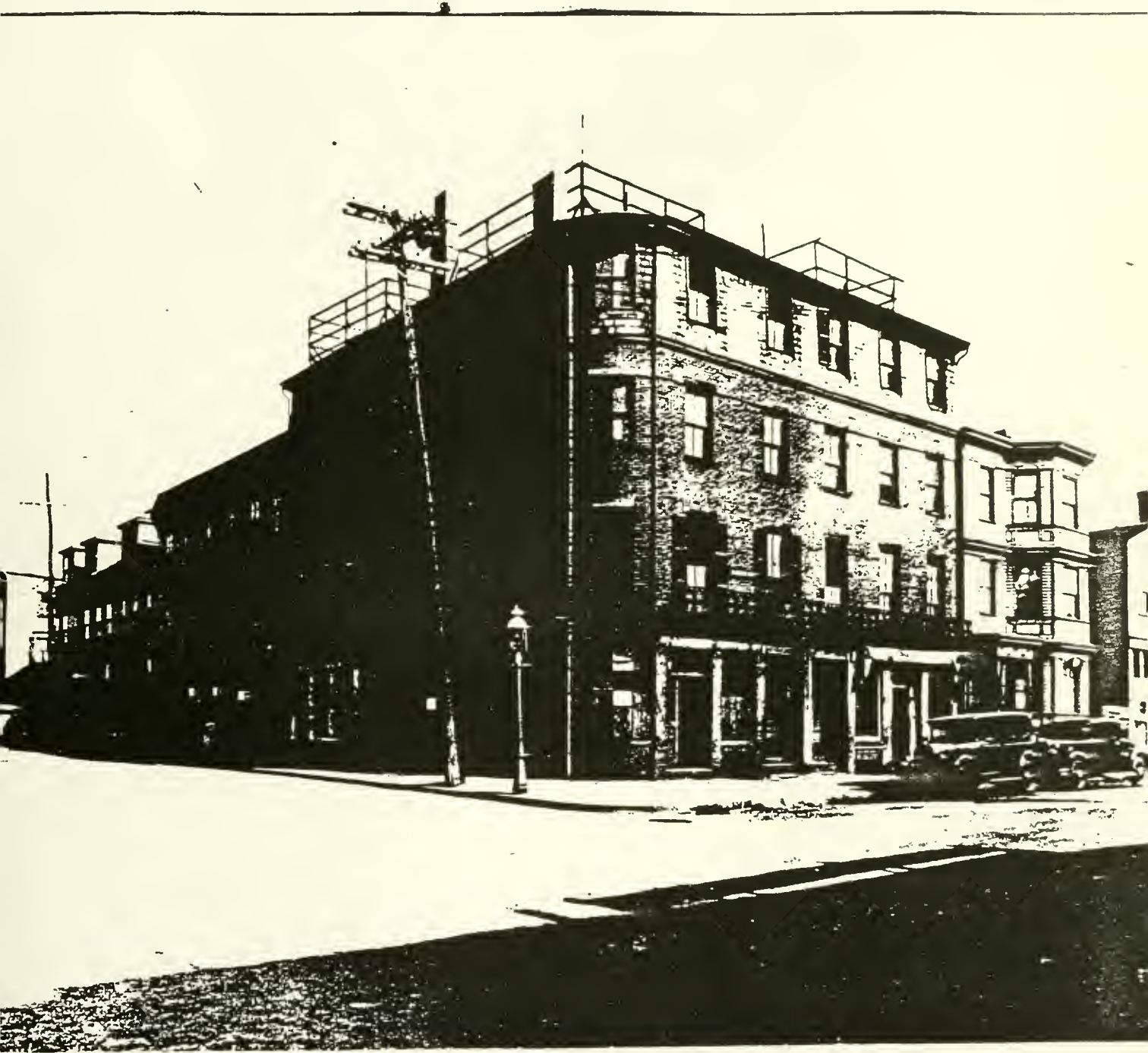
THE HEIGHTS YAUGHT CLUB



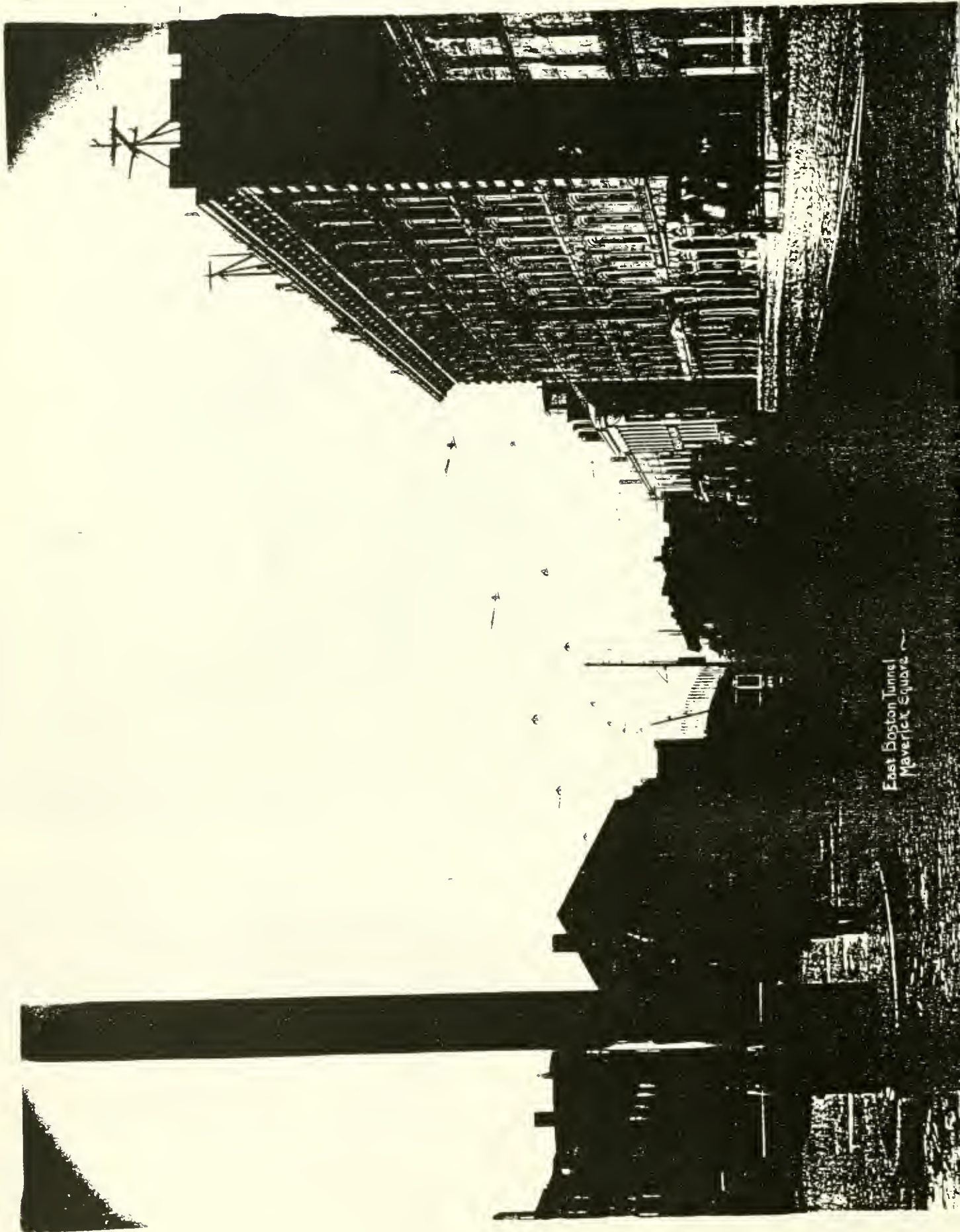
Pauline Reunberg leading one of her exercise classes at Wood Island Park, 1900's

SUBWAYS



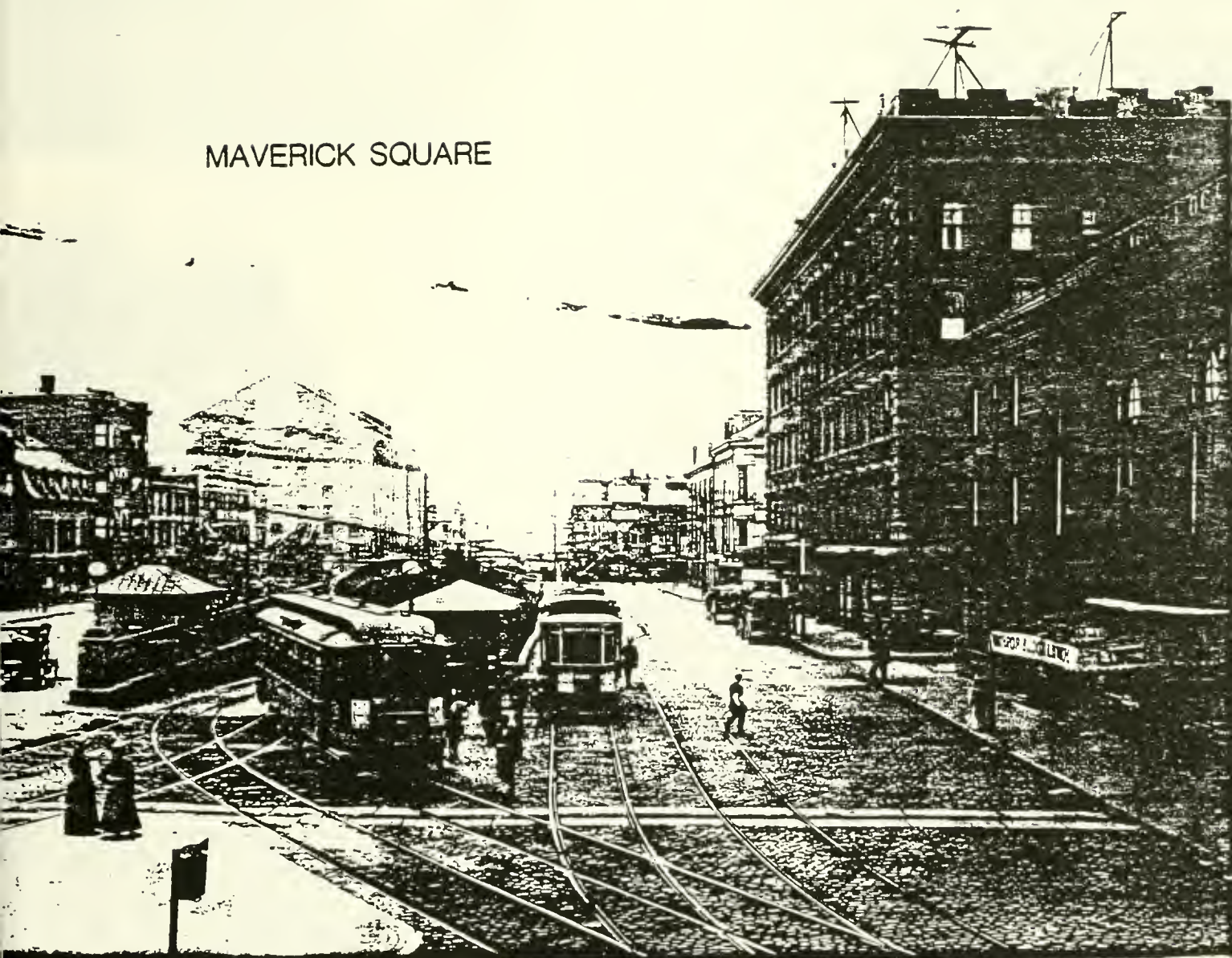


STREETSCAPES



East Boston Tunnel
Maverick Square

MAVERICK SQUARE





MERIDIAN STREET



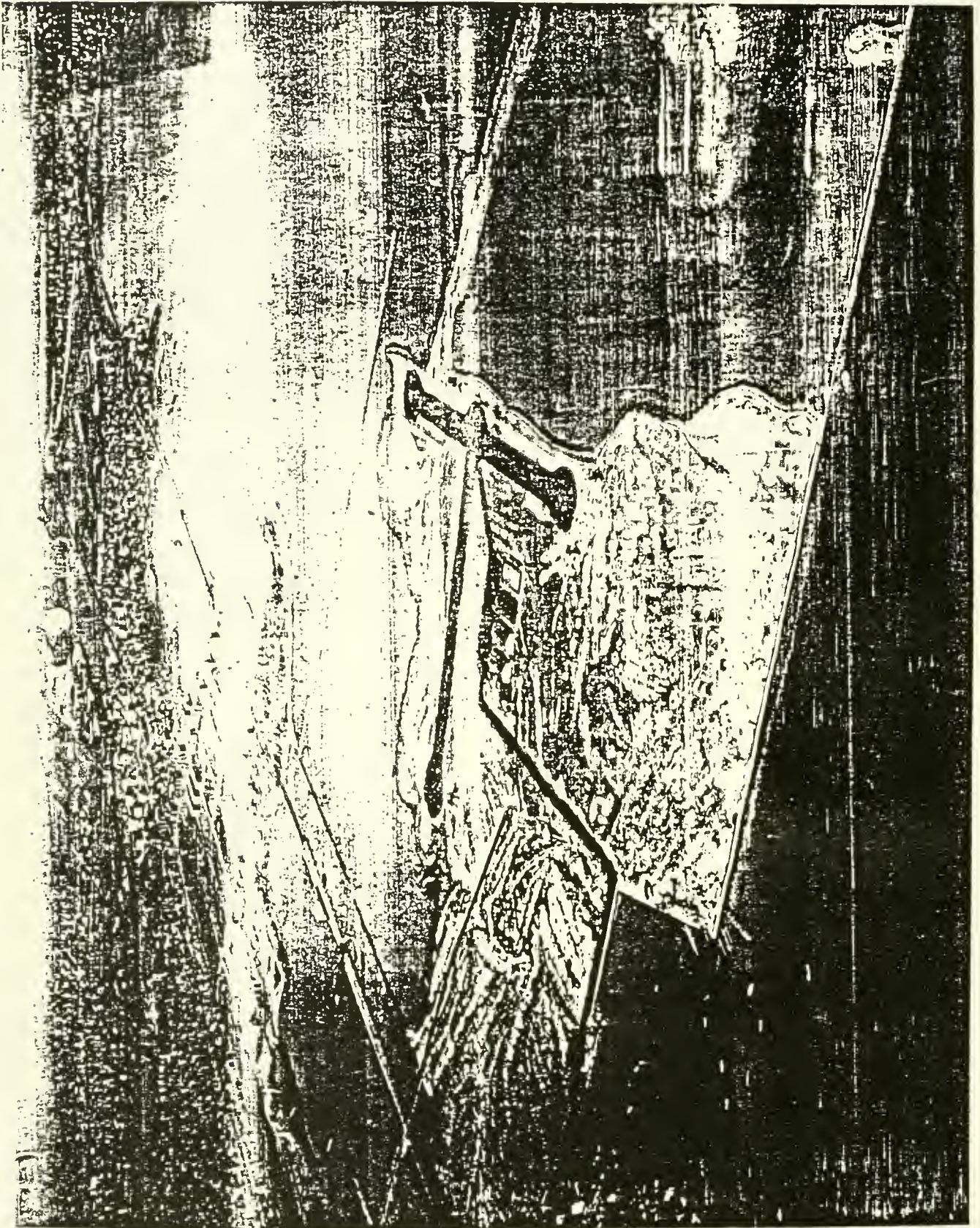


CENTRAL SQUARE





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THE AIRPORT IN 1923

S. SWALE

